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Objective Values and Moral Relativism

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Objective Values and Moral Relativism

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

the University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2005

Objective Values and Moral Relativism

Publication No._____

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2005

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My basic question in this dissertation is whether we can talk about practical moral truth without relying on objective (or transcendent) moral values. Recently some moral philosophers in Britain claim that such objective values are not needed for the discussion of moral truth. The philosophers present different theoretical frames to ground their point and to describe moral phenomena. According to them, it is possible that practical moral standards or values need not be based on the objective (or transcendent) moral values. In this dissertation, I look into three kinds of theories: John Mackie's skepticism, Simon Blackburn's antirealism, and the sensibility theory proposed by David Wiggins and John McDowell. Each theory is analyzed and criticized during the first three chapters. In the final chapter, I discuss their common problems, and propose that the notion of objective moral values (or transcendent moral standards) can cure their problems.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Emotivism was a huge blow to moral theory in the twentieth century. A. J. Ayer and Charles Stevenson claimed that moral judgments are not really statements, but only emotive expressions that are neither true nor false. Hence they are like the simple outbursts such as “Hurrah” or some unmentionable expletives. Their position has been known as non-cognitivism. In general, non-cognitivists hold that moral judgments and claims have nothing to do with objective moral facts or properties. In contrast, cognitivists hold that there can be no knowledge of moral truth where there are no objective moral properties. A number of moral cognitivists have attempted to salvage the notion of moral truth from the emotivist wreckage. Recently, this salvation movement was spearheaded by John Mackie and followed by Simon Blackburn, and David Wiggins and John McDowell. All of them repudiate non-conitivism and want to be known as cognitivists, by avowing moral truth in one form or another. But none of them is willing to accept moral realism or objectivism holding that moral values are independent of us. That is, they want to secure moral truth without appealing to objective, external, or transcendent moral values. Hence there is an unavoidable tension between their proposed notion of moral truth and their denial of objective moral values. And their aspirations appear to be incoherent. So I have decided to investigate the tension and incoherence in their projects in my dissertation.

Mackie is best known for his error theory, namely the claim that our belief in objective moral values is an error. But that is only the negative feature of his moral theory. The positive feature is his endorsement of moral cognitivism. After demarcating between the two orders of morality, he asserts that our moral judgments

must have truth values. His error theory holds that there are no objective moral values in the second order. But his cognitivism holds that we can talk about truth and falsity of moral judgments in the first order. In support of his error theory, he advances two arguments: the argument from relativity and the argument from queerness. I examine both arguments and show that neither of them can fully substantiate his error theory. In fact, I show that both of his arguments can be used to support the existence of objective moral values, by which he chiefly means the Platonic Forms or the transcendent values.

Mackie's first-order morality is composed of the community moral standards, by virtue of which we can talk about the truth and falsity of everyday moral judgments. This is his view of moral objectivity. But these community standards are established by convention. Therefore the resulting moral truths are the truths by convention, which may be called conventional truths. Such truths are relative truths. This is not a surprise. As for him, it is true that the community standards vary from one community to another. But he does not want to endorse the relativism within a community. It is a fact that the first-order morality is in demand for harmonious pursuit of individual wants and desires. But he does not accept the idea that moral values can be determined solely by wants and desires. If moral values or standards can be determined this way, it is possible that arbitrary standards such as slavery can be produced. He knows very well that people are anxious about this possibility. So, he says that we must have moral sense or intuition for constructing the right first-order morality. These normative considerations raise the most difficult question for him: "What is the ground for these normative considerations?" Are there objective

moral demands beyond subjective preferences? I show that it is exceedingly difficult for him to ignore some objective demands in securing the right first-order morality. This surely goes against his own error theory.

Blackburn rejects Mackie's error theory. In his view, Mackie erroneously assumes that our moral judgments and activities are based on the objective values that are falsely believed to exist. Blackburn says that there is no need to make this assumption, because it is empirically evident that the objective values do not exist. He offers a simpler theory to account for our moral judgments: They are the projections of our moral attitudes and feelings. Moral properties and attributes are subjective projections. This is his projectivism. Moral properties look like real, but they are not really real. Hence Blackburn calls them quasi-real. His quasi-realism can account for the truth value of moral judgments; they are true or false because of the quasi-real moral properties. Although his projectivism is outright subjectivist, Blackburn does not condone relativism because he believes moral judgments carry the demand of universality, that is, they should be true for everybody and everywhere. He supports this demand with his thesis that truth is one. The truth that is one and the same everywhere must be true without any qualification. If moral truth is that kind of truth, it cannot be merely quasi-real, but really real. Thus the strong demand he imposes on moral truth threatens his quasi-realism, which is built on his antirealism. Furthermore, the demand of universal truth for moral judgments poses another problem: "How can he reconcile their universality with his projectivism and subjectivism?" He never gives a satisfactory answer to this question. I show that the

demand of universality cannot be fulfilled without appealing to some transcendent moral standards.

Wiggins and McDowell offer their moral sensibility theory as a better account of moral truths than those of Mackie and Blackburn. Their sensibility theory is a revival of the moral sense theory sponsored by Hutcheson and Adam Smith in the eighteenth century. For this revival project, they play Bishop Berkeley's argument against Mackie's Lockean distinction between primary and secondary qualities. According to Locke, the primary qualities are objective, but the secondary qualities are subjective. Berkeley rejects this Lockean demarcation on the ground that both primary and secondary qualities are equally perception-dependent. It seems that Wiggins and McDowell advance this Berkeleyean argument in their no-priority thesis for sensibility in general. According to them, moral sensibility and moral truth consist in the <property, response> pair. They believe that this pairing can be applied to other sensibilities. For example, when I perceive a color, the color is a property and my perception of the color is a response. For another example, when I laugh over a comic situation, my funny feeling is the response to the property of being funny in the comic situation. The no-priority thesis is that there is no priority either for the response or for the property. McDowell and Wiggins say that the property and the response are mutually dependent and that they come into being simultaneously. Thus, a moral judgment is a response to a moral property, and they are mutually dependent on each other. The no-priority thesis is against Mackie's Lockean model and Blackburn's projectivism, both of which admit the priority rule. On the Lockean model, primary qualities are prior to secondary qualifies. According to Blackburn,

the subjective attitude and feelings are prior to the projected properties. The no-priority thesis also goes against moral realism, according to which moral properties are prior to moral judgments. According to McDowell and Wiggins, all priority theories are mistaken because our experience never confirms such priority. So, they argue for the no-priority thesis as the primary principle of all sensibilities.

The no-priority thesis is meant to provide the ground of moral truth: Moral judgments are true by virtue of the moral properties that are always paired with the corresponding moral judgments. The moral truth thus secured by the no-priority thesis is much stronger than Mackie's conventional truth or Blackburn's quasi-real truth, because it is real truth. But this is not the end of the story. If the no-priority thesis is correct, there can be no false moral judgments. By the nature of sensibility, every moral response is paired with some moral property that can guarantee its truth. This is truth by pairing, which can never fail. The pairing of response and property is as tight as the pairing of visible objects and their shades. Unfortunately, this absolute guarantee is limited to one individual because the next individual may have a different sensibility and a different pairing of property and response. Thus the truth by pairing turns out to be highly subjective. To get out of this subjective predicament, Wiggins and McDowell advocate their convergence theory. In the development of human civilization, they say, different sensibilities have converged and generated common standards for each culture or country. By using the common standards, moral judgments can be said to be true or false. This sort of truth may be called truth by convergence, which is very much like Mackie's truth by convention. Convergence can create convention. Thus the sensibility theory surprisingly leads to the same

result as Mackie's, in spite of the sensibility theorists' endeavor to cure Mackie's subjectivism. Moreover, the highly touted no-priority thesis has nothing to do with the convergence theory.

For the sensibility theory, the convergence of sensibility is far more important than the no-priority thesis. Unfortunately, Wiggins and McDowell do not satisfactorily explain how the convergence of different sensibilities takes place. They primarily appeal to the development of civilizations. But if we look carefully at the development of civilizations, the trend of divergence appears to be more powerful than the trend of convergence. At the beginning of human civilization, presumably, all primitive human societies were very much alike. That was their initial convergence. But they diverged from one another as they developed. Divergence takes place even within the same culture. For example, consider the historical development of Christianity. There was a high degree of convergence in the medieval Christianity, which was shattered by the Reformation. The multiplication of Protestant sects is an astounding phenomenon of divergence. This may be true of moral phenomena. There was a time when the Christians could talk of their solid morality. But nowadays there are many different versions of Christian morality. In that case, we can never hope that we can obtain the convergence of moral sensibilities as a gift of historical development.

Wiggins differentiates the moral convergence from Charles Peirce's idea of convergence in scientific inquiry. Wiggins believes that moral convergence need not be as strict as Peircean convergence for scientific inquiry. In the Peircean model, the convergence is governed by the object of inquiry. The scientists have the hope of

converging on the same point because all of them are trying to understand the same object. But there is no such common object for the moral inquiry. I have my moral sensibility; you have your moral sensibility. But they are different, and there is no common object for our different moral sensibilities although we agree that moral values should be established. Whereas the scientific convergence is linked to an object, there is no object to anchor or lure the convergence of moral sentiments. For this reason, Wiggins says that moral convergence is different from scientific convergence. However, if there is no object at all, then even convergence cannot produce any truths. Suppose that you and I and all other members of our small community converge on the idea that there are unicorns. But this convergence can produce no truth if there are no unicorns. Therefore I claim that the convergence of sensibility can lead to truth claims only when it is linked to a transcendent object like the Platonic Form of Justice. Only then the convergence of moral sentiments can be meaningfully discussed for the attainment of moral truth.

I have said enough to give you the impression that the three moral theories I have examined are very much alike. Let us consider their common ground. All of them repudiate objective or transcendent values (or standards). They all begin with the subjective response, which are sometimes given different names. Mackie calls it moral sense or intuition. Blackburn calls it moral attitude or feeling. Wiggins and McDowell calls it moral sensibility or sentiments. All of them agree that moral standards are constructed by human beings—sometimes by contract, sometimes by convention, and sometimes by convergence. By virtue of the conventional standards, they say, we can talk about the truth and falsity of moral judgments, although there

are no real moral properties or objective values. This amounts to Blackburn's quasi-realism. Although he often uses this expression, he never gives a clear definition of quasi-realism. Instead he gives a description of the quasi-realist as "a person who, starting from a recognizably anti-realist position, finds himself progressively able to mimic the intellectual practices supposedly definitive of realism" (*Essays in Quasi-Realism*, p. 15). In substance, quasi-realism is no different from antirealism. But the quasi-realist mimics the realist in talking about the truth and falsity of moral judgments, that is, he thinks and talks as though they were really true. With the conventional standards, Mackie, Wiggins, and McDowell can join Blackburn in the game of mimicking the realist by talking about the truth and falsity of moral propositions. Therefore I regard all their theories as different versions of moral quasi-realism.

All of them also say that they cannot take any external perspectives, that is, the moral perspectives that stand outside human sensibility. For this reason, I believe that all of them subscribe to moral internalism. In his "Internalism's Wheel," Michael Smith has made the obvious point that internalism inevitably leads to relativism. I show that this outcome is also inevitable for Mackie, Blackburn, McDowell, and Wiggins. But all of them try to get over the hurdle of relativism. Michael Smith has explained the difficulty of getting over this hurdle in his fable of the Wheel of Internalism. In the last chapter of this dissertation, I employ this fable to show that my four internalists cannot get out of the trap of relativism without appealing to the Platonic Forms. For this demonstration, I have converted Michael Smith's Wheel of Internalism to the Platonic Ladder of Relativism. I have done this because the Wheel

of Internalism does not really revolve like a wheel. At the end of its rotation, the wheel does not automatically come back to the original point. At the end of one rotation on Michael Smith's Wheel of Internalism, one can go either forward or backward. If one goes backward, one feels like climbing down a ladder. Therefore, the metaphor of ascent and descent on a ladder is more effective for expressing Michael's Smith idea. The idea of ascending and descending on a ladder is the Platonic idea of ascent and descent. So I have used this Platonic metaphor in mapping out the route that our British internalists must take to get out of their Platonic cave of internalism. In my view, the internalists are trapped in their Platonic caves of subjective beliefs and standards, and they can find their redemption only by climbing the Platonic Ladder to the transcendent norms. This is the conclusion of my last chapter. Thus my dissertation begins with Mackie's repudiation of Platonic transcendent norms and ends with my humble attempt to reinstate them as the universal foundation of morality.

Chapter 1

Mackie's Skepticism

J. L. Mackie is skeptical about the existence of absolute moral values—in his own term "objectively prescriptive moral values."[1] He says that these values would guide our moral judgments and actions, if they were to exist. A good example of such values is Platonic Form of the Good. He says,

> [The] main tradition of European moral philosophy from Plato onwards has combined the view that moral values are objective with the recognition that moral judgements are partly prescriptive or directive or action-guiding. Values themselves have been seen as at once prescriptive and objective. In Plato's theory the Forms, and in particular the Form of the Good, are eternal extra-mental, realities. They are a very central structural element in the fabric of the world. But it is held also that just knowing them or 'seeing' them will not merely tell men what to do but will ensure that they do it, overruling any contrary inclinations. (*Ethics*, p. 23)

The notion of objective moral value Mackie tries to reject is something like absolute commands that can direct our response and conduct. Even when we have desires and inclinations conflicting with the values, Mackie requires that objectively prescriptive moral values should make us strive for realizing them. Flatly he denies the possibility that such values can exist.

He rejects the existence of objective moral values for the reason that our cognitive system can never detect their existence. He further argues that our practical moral activities are not motivated by such objective values. Moral judgment is a prescriptive judgment, which is a purely subjective mental activity, according to him. Thus, it does not make sense at all to claim that there are objectively prescriptive moral values.

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[1] He sometimes uses "objective (moral) values" or "objectively valid (moral) values" instead of "objectively prescriptive moral values."

Although there is no objective moral value, Mackie says, we can evaluate moral judgments and claims as true or false, as long as there are criteria for their evaluation. He says, "[T]here are certain kinds of value statements which undoubtedly can be true or false, even if, in the sense I intend, there are no objective values" (*Ethics*, p. 25). At first glance, this statement looks contradictory. But he is talking about two different levels of moral consideration. The consideration about objectively prescriptive moral values belongs to the second-order consideration. This consideration deals with the nature or status of moral values. But the consideration about concrete practical moral rules and judgments belongs to the first-order. On the first-order level, we can estimate various moral judgments and claims as true or false, as long as we are provided with standards. Hence, Mackie is a cognitivist who believes that moral judgments and claims can be estimated as true or false. Although he is a skeptic of the second-order moral values, he is not skeptical about the validity of ordinary moral standards because of the separation of the two orders of moral consideration. He holds that the orders of morality are not merely distinct but completely independent of each other (*Ethics*, p. 16). He also says, "[F]irst order judgements are not necessarily affected by the truth or falsity of a second order view" (*Ethics*, p. 22).

Some examples will make clear the distinction of the two levels of ethical consideration. Suppose a plantation owner in a southern state before the Civil War asks himself, "Is it good to force my slaves to work all day in such a hot summer day?" or "Am I treating them too harshly?" It may occur to him that his slaves are strong enough to endure such a sizzling weather or that his treatment is not outrageous in terms of the contemporary laws and custom. His questions are examples of the first-order moral question. The questions can be answered usually by referring to laws, conventions, or contemporary ethical rules. These criteria usually can evaluate

daily moral judgments or solve moral disputes. Another day the same man may come to think about more profound questions such as, "Is slavery a morally good system?" "Am I not violating their rights or dignity given by God?" These questions are the second-order questions. These questions cannot be answered by relying on existing moral rules or convention, because the questions are concerned with the legitimacy of those rules or convention. So, his questions could be answered by examining the ground of the system.

The distinction of the two levels of moral consideration is a unique feature of Mackie's skepticism. Most skeptics before him usually insisted simply that there were no moral truth whatever. Moral skepticism meant that no moral rules could be endorsed or established. Accordingly, they held that there was neither moral truth nor true-or-false moral judgments. This traditional skepticism has a fatal weakness. It not only conflicts with our ordinary moral belief, but also may entail a chaos of moral values. Traditional skeptics hardly explain the factual stability of our moral values and system. Mackie's demarcation of the two levels of moral consideration can explain the stability of our moral system while retaining the tenet of skepticism. This point seems to be his unique contribution to the tradition of skepticism. Another implication of Mackie's skepticism is that a distinction should be made between practical or concrete moral values and academic discussion on them. Some philosophical theories may advocate moral skepticism, and some others may champion moral realism. Even though Mackie argues for the absence of ultimate or objective moral standards, he holds that the absence does not necessarily affect the current mode of moral life. Mackie attempts to show in the second part of his *Ethics* that our current moral system can be explained and improved for the better without relying on objective moral values of the second order.

Error Theory

Mackie's error theory means not only that there are no objectively prescriptive moral values, but also that the meaning of objectivity embedded in our moral thought and moral languages is false. It is true that most people believe in the existence of objective (and prescriptive) moral values and that our moral words express this belief. For instance, when someone says, "It is wrong to do X," he thinks normally this moral statement is an objective judgment. Although it is possible that some moral judgments are mistaken, we think that moral judgments and claims basically represent objectively prescriptive values, not subjective opinions. But Mackie insists this belief and the linguistic habits grounded in the belief are all wrong because there is no objectively valid moral value. He says,

> The claim to objectivity, however ingrained in our language and thought, is not self-validating. It can and should be questioned. But the denial of objective values will have to be put forward not as the result of an analytic approach, but as an 'error theory', a theory that although most people in making moral judgements implicitly claim, among other things to be pointing to something objectively prescriptive, these claims are all false. It is this that makes the name 'moral scepticism' appropriate. (*Ethics*, p. 35)

By linguistic analysis, one may claim that our moral language contains the meaning of objectivity. Mackie's goal in his error theory is to point out the limit of linguistic inquiry regarding the objectivity of moral values. He acknowledges the fact that we use moral words as if they did express objective moral values. But he argues that this fact never proves existence of objective moral values. Our moral language only expresses the commonsense moral beliefs, but does not prove the truth of those beliefs.

If moral values were objective, Mackie says that their existence should be able to be ascertained by our perception, and guide our actions regardless of wants and desires. He uses the color analogy to show that the values are not objective.

According to Boyle and Locke, "colours as they occur in material things consist simply in patterns of arrangement and movement of minute particles on the surfaces of objects, which . . . enable these objects to produce colour sensations in us; but that colours as we see them do not literally belong to the surfaces of material thing" (*Ethics*, p. 19). Color is not a real property of objects, but a sort of phantasm caused by the combined work of pigments and light. This nature of color is a well-known scientific fact. Also, this analogy explains Locke's popular distinction of qualities – i.e., the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Locke regards objectivity as a feature of primary qualities. Primary qualities such as extension, gravity, solidity, etc are the objective qualities of objects. The shape of an object is a primary quality; it is objective. On the other hand, secondary qualities such as tastes, smells, sounds, etc are not the objective qualities of objects. They belong to the observers. The color of an object is a secondary quality; it is subjective.

This analogy is useful for the denial of the objectivity of moral values. And it may well explain Mackie's view of moral values – that is, moral values are invented. But it is not certain whether Mackie really wants to adopt the secondary-quality model for his view of moral values. First of all, he neither explicitly says that he uses the secondary-quality model, nor claims moral values as secondary qualities. Second, the objective moral values he wants to reject are different from secondary qualities in one important respect. According to him, the belief or perception of objective moral values is false, but the perception of secondary qualities is not. Hence it is difficult to liken practical moral values or community standards to secondary values. So, we have to be cautious in adopting the color analogy. He uses the analogy only to show the illusory nature of objective moral values.

Mackie warns that the existence of objectively prescriptive moral values is not supported by some objective aspects in our practice of moral values. If there are

standards by agreement, we may be able to talk and communicate values in an objective manner. But this has nothing to do with the objectively prescriptive values. He says, "To say that there are objective values would not be to say merely that there are something which are valued by everyone, nor does it entail this. There could be agreement in valuing even if valuing is just something that people do, even if this activity is not further validated" (*Ethics*, p. 22).

To Mackie, the claim that there are objectively prescriptive moral values is distinguished from the claim that moral words describe facts. The latter claim is the tenet of descriptivism. Descriptivism is "a doctrine about the meanings of ethical terms and statements, namely that their meanings are purely descriptive rather than even partly prescriptive or emotive or evaluative, or that it is not an essential feature of the conventional meaning of moral statements that they have some special illocutionary force, say of commending rather than asserting" (*Ethics*, p. 23).[2] This theory holds that moral words describe facts as non-moral words do. So, it is possible that moral statements and claims can be evaluated true or false. But Mackie does not refute descriptivism although he rejects objective values. His target is what he calls (moral) objectivism. Mackie regards Plato's moral theory as the best paradigm of moral objectivism. Also, Kant's theory and Sidgwick's theory are contributive to the moral objectivism, according to Mackie (*Ethics*, p. 30). Moral objectivism may be primarily responsible for our having the false belief of objectively prescriptive moral values. Or our belief of the objective values supports moral objectivism. Mackie tries to prove his error theory by two arguments: the argument from relativity and the argument from queerness.

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[2] The descriptivism Mackie has in mind is usually called cognitivism. The opposing view is called non-cognitivism. But R. M. Hare says this distinction is not accurate. He says that another distinction, descriptivism v. non-descriptivism explains better the difference between the two views. Mackie uses the terms in a mixed way. Instead of descriptivism and non-descriptivism, he uses descriptivism and non-cognitivism.

Argument from Relativity

The argument from relativity is based on the fact that practical moral rules vary from one society to another, from one time to another. This fact may indicate that there are no objectively valid moral values. If there are objectively valid moral values, Mackie holds, there would be much less variation of practical moral codes than we now experience.

The existence of variation or disagreement does not necessarily indicate that there are no objective values. Even in the history of science there have been many disagreements over scientific facts. But scientific disagreement is different from moral disagreement. Mackie says,

> Disagreement on questions in history or biology or cosmology does not show that there are no objective issues in these fields for investigators to disagree about. But such scientific disagreement results from speculative inferences or explanatory hypotheses based on inadequate evidence, and it is hardly plausible to interpret moral disagreements in the same way. Disagreement about moral codes seems to reflect people's adherence to and participation in different ways of life. (*Ethics*, p. 36)

Scientific disagreements come from incorrect interpretations of facts. Also inadequate or insufficient evidence may generate diverse interpretations. If some scientists can show strong evidence, their differences may be resolved.

Mackie thinks that there is no way of resolving moral disagreements because the disagreements come from differences in culture or lifestyle. For example, if people live in a monogamous society, they approve of monogamy. But the reverse relation does not hold. That is, a society of monogamy is not built on people's approval of monogamy. He says, "The causal connection seems to be mainly that way round: it is that people approve of monogamy because they participate in a monogamous way of life rather than that they participate in a monogamous way of

life because they approve of monogamy" (*Ethics*, p. 36). There is no resolution of moral disagreements, so that there is no objective moral value.

I have two questions about Mackie's argument. First, if people do not really approve of monogamy, why do they adopt and retain the system as a standard? Mackie gives a clue for the answer. He says, "Of course, the standards may be an idealization of the way of life from which they arise: the monogamy in which people participate may be less complete, less rigid, than that of which it leads them to approve" (*Ethics*, p. 36). The standards are adopted and maintained because they are the idealization of the people's way of life. But not everyone accepts and lives by the standards. In fact, many people have tastes or desires different from what the standard demands. Consequently, the society has a less perfect or less rigid form of monogamy. In fact, there is a lot of disagreement about monogamy within a monogamous society. This undermines Mackie's argument from relativity. This argument says: because there are insoluble moral disagreements among societies, there are no objective moral values. The same logic can be applied to each society's moral standards. That is, because there are insoluble moral disagreements even within one society, there are no moral standards in that society. But Mackie does not want to endorse this conclusion. The existence of moral standards in any society appears to be immune to the insoluble moral disagreements in that society. If we follow this logic, we have to say that the existence of objective moral values is immune to the insoluble moral disagreements between different societies. In that case, the argument from relativity carries no weight in proving the non-existence of objective values.

Second, Mackie says that moral values or standards originate from culture, tradition, or convention. But moral values and standards do not shape culture, tradition, or convention. If what he says is true, we cannot make moral values or

judgments that go against our culture, tradition, or convention. But this is hardly the case. We do often criticize or reject our culture, tradition, or convention. For example, the moral values in the Roman Empire after the acceptance of Christianity can be hardly explained by the tradition and convention that prevailed before the introduction of Christianity. Similarly, almost all revolutions actually adopt new moral values very different from the previous tradition and convention. Mackie tries to cope with this problem:

> This is not to say that moral judgments are purely conventional. Of course there have been and are moral heretics and moral reformers, people who have turned against the established rules and practices of their own communities for moral reasons, and often for moral reasons we would endorse. But this can usually be understood as the extension, in ways which, though new and unconventional, seemed to them to be required for consistency, of rules to which they already adhered as arising out of an existing way of life. (*Ethics*, pp. 36-37)

He admits that not all moral judgments are conventional. There have been challenges and oppositions to established moral values. And sometimes new moral values have replaced old ones. But Mackie is saying that a new moral value is not a severance from the established way of life. There is consistency even in the changes because new moral values are endorsed as an extension of the established values or rules.

Mackie's account in the quotation above is puzzling. It is not certain whether or not he regards new moral values as fundamentally different from old values. Sometimes he says that new moral values are different from old values and that new values are endorsed for some moral reasons. In that case, the new moral values stand on their own reasons and are not dependent on any convention. A moral objectivist can say that these moral values independent of convention are equivalent to objective or transcendental values. But Mackie would never concede this point for the objectivist. To this end, he gives another account of the moral change: The endorsement of new values is to be understood as an extension of existing way of life.

If so, the endorsement has nothing to do with objective or transcendental moral values. But his notion of "existing way of life" is not the same as convention. The existing way of life should be more comprehensive than convention. This is because convention can be changed while existing way of life remains the same. If so, the objectivists can say that there are objective moral values that shape the fundamental ways of human life. They can say that there are a number of moral values such as honesty and justice that have hardly changed in the past and will hardly change in the future, in so far as human beings live together by forming family, society, or nation. The argument from relativity may sound plausible as long as it is based on the relativity of conventions or their mutability. But it can no longer stand on solid ground as soon as Mackie shifts it from convention to the way of life.

There is an even more forceful objection to the argument from relativity. Mackie is fully aware of it. He says that a way of countering the argument is to appeal to "general basic principles" rather than "specific moral rules or codes." That is, the objector says, "[T]he items for which objective validity is in the first place to be claimed are not specific moral rules or codes but very general basic principles which are recognized at least implicitly to some extent in all society . . . " (*Ethics*, p. 37). Objective validity is claimed not for any specific rules, but for general basic principles such as the principle of equality, the principle of fairness, the principle of universalizability, etc. Suppose that the principle of equality is adopted by many societies, but it is implemented differently because their social conditions are different. This can be regarded as a case of relativism in support of the argument from relativity. But this is the relativity that reflects different situations. The situational relativity is introduced for the sake of realizing one and the same principle of equality. Therefore, the alleged relativity proves the objective value of equality. Thus the argument from

relativity can be used to prove the existence of objective values, although Mackie tries to use it for its disproof. This is a fatal blow to Mackie's position.

In fact, if we search for the fundamental ideas embedded in any society's moral rules, we are likely to find some general principles. Without outlining how citizens are to be treated or how conflicts between them are to be solved, no society can bind people together. Based upon these general principles, moral rules and values may specify how people behave in concrete cases. Hence, it seems reasonable to say that those general principles provide the basis of practical moral values. I think even Mackie cannot deny the function of general principles. He says, "[T]here is some plausibility in the claim that the specific rules thus generated will vary from community to community or from group to group in close agreement with the actual variations in accepted codes" (*Ethics*, p. 37). He admits that the general-principle account damages his argument from relativity. But he insists that the damage is minor. However, he does not know how to cope with this minor damage. Nor does he suspect that it can blow up his whole show.

In spite of the weakness, he holds that the argument from relativity is still viable because the general-principle account has its own problem. The problem is that the appeal to general principles hardly describes actual ways of making moral judgments. According to the general principle model, moral judgments are to be made derivatively and contingently on a general principle. He says, "To take this line the moral objectivist has to say that it is only in these principles that the objective moral character attaches immediately to its descriptively specified ground or subject: other moral judgements are objectively valid or true, but only derivatively and contingently—if things had been otherwise, quite different sorts of actions would have been right" (*Ethics*, p. 37). Put it another way, since the objectivity of moral judgments relies on a specific general principle, rightness or wrongness of moral

judgments varies with what principle is adopted. For instance, if the principle of equality is used as the basic principle, moral judgments promoting equality among people are objective and right. If the principle of inequality is used as the basic principle, moral judgments condemning equality are objective and right. Which moral judgments will come out right depends on which general principle is adopted as the basic principle.

In real moral practice, Mackie says, we never appeal to general principles in making moral judgments. Instead, we make moral judgments immediately. He says, "[People] judge that some things are good or right, and others are bad or wrong, not because . . . they exemplify some general principle . . . but because something about those things arouses certain responses immediately in them, though they would arouse radically and irresolvably different responses in others. 'Moral sense' or 'intuition' is an initially more plausible description of what supplies many of our basic moral judgements than 'reason'" (*Ethics*, pp. 37-38). According to him, the general principle model is wrong because rightness or wrongness of moral judgments is made by moral sense or intuition, not by using a general principle. This fact also means that reason plays no role in making moral judgments. For the moral objectivists, reason usually plays a crucial role: The truth or falsity of each moral judgment is determined by examining how the judgments satisfy the requirement of general principles. But Mackie is saying that this account is wrong again because it goes against our moral experience. When one says that stealing is wrong, he is not appealing to any general principle like Kant's principle of universalizability or Mill's greatest happiness principle. One says that stealing is wrong just because it is the reflection of one's moral sense or intuition.

I have two arguments against Mackie's account of moral judgment. First, he seems to neglect one important point. Moral objectivists do not necessarily deny the

fact that people usually make moral judgments as Mackie describes – that is, moral judgments are immediate responses. But they do not believe that immediate moral judgments authenticate their own truth. They believe that the truth of a moral judgment can be ascertained only by careful reflection and deliberation. Mackie's allegedly phenomenological account of moral judgments leaves no room for moral deliberation and reflection. To be sure, he holds that the truth value of moral judgments is determined by appealing to community standards (*Ethics*, p. 25). This may be regarded as Mackie's version of moral reflection and deliberation. But moral reflection and deliberation cannot terminate at the level of community standards because those standards may demand further critical examination. We may have reasons to believe that those standards are wrong or inadequate and that they are not reliable to be used for evaluating our moral judgments. In that case, we have to appeal to some general principles that transcend the community standards. There is no way to avoid general principles in our moral practice unless we accept our community standards as the indisputable moral authority. But I do not believe that even Mackie will go this far in his support of community standards.

Second, Mackie assumes that there are just two ways of making moral judgments: one based on the community standards and the other based on general principles. He further assumes that the community standards are specific and that general principles are general and vague. He also assumes that the community standard model is actually operative in the practical life of ordinary people and that the general principle model is theoretically endorsed the moral objectivists. He finally assumes that these two models are exclusive of each other. But this is a faulty picture of how moral judgments are made for two reasons. First, no objectivist has ever said that all moral judgments are made by using general principles all the times. Second, even ordinary people do use both the community standards and general

principles in their moral judgments. For example, when we see a rich man take advantage of poor people, our moral sense or intuition says, "It is wrong to exploit the poor." But probably, our moral sense can say this because the incidence violates a general principle, say, a principle of fair treatment. For another example, suppose a person behaves very egoistically. He asks every kind of favor from his neighbor. But he turns his back when his neighbor asks for his help. We can immediately feel, "This person is selfish and bad." By this we are not only condemning his selfishness, but appealing to the principle of fairness. Thus the moral sense account does not exclude the general principle account.

Overall, the argument from relativity is not effective for disproving the existence of objective moral values. That is, the relativity of the first-order moral values cannot demonstrate that there are no objective values on the second order. Remember what he says about the relation between the first order and the second order moral values. He says that the two orders—or consideration of the two orders—are completely independent (*Ethics*, p. 16). The separation of the two levels is a crucial feature of Mackie's skepticism. His skepticism is supposed to reject the objective values on the second order and leaves the first-order values intact. If their separation and independence do not obtain, the skepticism of the second order must infect the first order, too. His argument from relativity is supposed to be limited to the first order moral values. That means that relativity is limited to the first order. His extension of the relativity in the first order to the second order violates his own logic. Further, even if we concede Mackie's point in the argument from relativity, the argument does not necessarily disprove the objective values. Although the first-order moral values are various, there still can be objective values. The first-order moral values are made by taking into account the objective values, natural and social environments, and others. That is, the objective values can serve the foundation of

the first-order moral values. As we have seen, he concedes that there can be general principles shared by different societies. I think he is right in saying this. He says this without noticing that he actually endorses the objective values.

Argument from Queerness

This argument is the centerpiece of Mackie's criticism of moral objectivism. Its main point: It is queer to claim that there are objectively prescriptive moral values, because our moral experience never catches or confirms such values. He says,

> [The argument from queerness] has two parts, one metaphysical, the other epistemological. If there were objective [moral] values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe. Correspondingly, if we were aware of them, it would have to be some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else. (*Ethics*, p. 38)

Mackie requires two conditions for objectivity: an ontological condition and an epistemic condition. If there were objectively prescriptive moral values, it should satisfy these two conditions. He seems to think that the two conditions are mutually supportive in disproving objectivity of moral values. Those values do not exist because we cannot perceive them; we cannot perceive them because they do not exist. If the values were to exist, he says, they would be very strange kind of entities they would be unperceivable. Their unperceivability is their queerness. They would perhaps be perceivable if we had a very special faculty. But we do not have such a "queer" faculty. Mackie takes Platonic Forms as an example of such queer entities. Because such queer entities can never be encountered in our ordinary experience, Mackie concludes, they do not exist. Therefore there are no objective moral values.

In his argument from queerness, Mackie basically accepts Humean empiricism. However, a serious problem of such empiricism is this: if empirical perception or common experience is the only way of getting knowledge, the range of our

knowledge must be severely limited. This is Richard Price's objection which Mackie considers (*Ethics*, p. 39). Price questions whether Humean empiricism adequately explains our way of getting knowledge. If Hume is right, we can never know the concepts like essence, number, identity, diversity, solidity, inertia, substance, etc. because they cannot be derived from Humean impressions. All these concepts are key elements in constructing systematic knowledge although they are not empirically perceivable. Price's point is that we have certain inner faculty that discerns non-empirical truths, and we have a power to discern moral truths or values without relying on experience. Mackie responds to Price's argument as follows:

> This is an important counter to the argument from queerness. The only adequate reply to it would be to show how, on empiricist foundations, we can construct an account of the ideas and beliefs and knowledge that we have of all these matters. I cannot even begin to do that here, though I have undertaken some parts of the task elsewhere. I can only state my belief that satisfactory accounts of most of these can be given in empirical terms. If some supposed metaphysical necessities or essences resist such treatment, then they too should be included, along with objective values, among the targets of the argument from queerness. (*Ethics,* p. 38)

Mackie is conceding that some abstract concepts mentioned such substance, essence, number are not derivable from impressions. He has two ways of dealing with them. They can be empirically constructed. If they cannot be so constructed, they should be discarded along with the concept of objective values.

In the *Ethics*, Mackie does not show how the abstract concepts can be explained in empirical terms. But he tries to give an empirical account of those concepts in his *Problems of Locke*. For example, he examines Locke's notion of material substance. Berkeley points out that Locke's notion of material substance is not empirical because it cannot be perceived. Mackie responds to this criticism of Locke. There are several different notions of substance. One popular notion is that substance is "the collection of readily perceivable features" (*Problems from Locke,* p. 76). Locke's notion of substance is different from this one. Mackie says that Locke's

notion is that each substance has "real essence," from which all the properties flow (*Problems from Locke*, p. 77). The real essence is not so-called matter, but "the particular internal constitution" (*Problems from Locke*, p. 77). He says, "The real essence of gold will be the way in which gold is built up out of some minute fundamental particles; water will have a different real essence, being built up in some different way, either from different fundamental particles or from the same ones differently combined and arranged" (*Problems from Locke*, pp. 77-78). So, material substance is identifiable with real essence. The real essence is composed of minute fundamental particles.

Then Mackie talks about Locke's distinction between real essence and nominal essence. He defines the nominal essence as "the set of features such that recognizing that a thing has them all is both necessary and sufficient for classifying that thing (*Problems from Locke*, p.85). For example, the nominal essence of gold is the set of those features such as color, weight, ductility, etc., by which we can recognize gold. The distinction between the two essences is important for how each natural kind is constituted. According to Locke, we occasionally make a mistake in which we handle or classify substances by relying on nominal essence. For example, we may think eel and snake belong to the same natural kind because of their common features. This mistake has been common even in science. Mackie says, "[Locke] points out that superficial likenesses have led to materials being classed as belonging to one species which have later been found to have very different properties: 'chemists especially are often, by sad experience, convinced of this, when they, sometimes in vain, seek for the same qualities in one parcel of sulphur, antimony, or vitriol which they have found in others'" (*Problems from Locke*, p. 88).

Locke concludes that the concept of substance as real essence is necessary for the scientific advance and observations. Hence Mackie thinks that this concept is

empirically justifiable. He says, "Rejecting the notion of a substratum underlying all properties and the logico-linguistic argument by which it is introduced, we can retain not only the objective reality of particular substances but also the reasonable postulation of internal constitutions and in particular of real essences of natural kinds including some modes as well as many, but not all, substances" (*Problems from Locke*, p. 105). He seems to take the concept of substance as a postulate for explaining empirical observations. That is, the postulated internal constitution (real essence) produces the impressions of the substance. The real essence is empirically grounded although it is not perceivable. This is one way of understanding the empirical basis for the Lockean concept of substance. But there is another way of reading Mackie's account. This is to connect the concept of substance to "some minute fundamental particles," which are supposed to make up the internal constitution of a substance. If there are such minute particles, they may become perceivable if a high-powered microscope is invented. If the real essence of a substance can become perceivable in the future, it can be accepted as an empirical entity.

The queerness of a concept depends on the question whether or not it can be accounted for in empirical terms (*Ethics*, p. 39). Although abstract concepts like substance can be explained in empirical terms, Mackie thinks, objective moral values cannot. But he does not explain why and how the account of objective moral values cannot be given in empirical terms. He may dogmatically assume that objective moral values are not empirical. But we can imagine the following objection to this dogmatic position. There is a certain parallel between the concept of substance and the concept of objective values because both of them are abstract concepts. Just like the concept of substance, the concept of objective values is not empirical, but it can be validated by appealing to our moral experience. For example, objective values such as impartiality and justice, though unperceivable, can be justified because they are

necessary for our moral experience. Mackie may object to this possibility by restricting his empirical validation to sense experience. Still he maintains that our moral experience is a matter of moral sense. However, if the reality of abstract concepts is to be approved, that of object moral values is too. Therefore Mackie's treatment of the objective moral values in comparison with abstract concepts is unfair, and reveals a serious weakness in his theory.

Mackie still think he is right. Now he wants to give another reason for his denying the objective moral values. He says,

> Plato's Forms give a dramatic picture of what objective values would have to be. The Form of the Good is such that knowledge of it provides the knower with both a direction and an overriding motive; something's good both tells the person who knows this to pursue it and makes him pursue it. An objective good would be sought by anyone who was acquainted with it, not because of any contingent fact that this person, or every person, is so constituted that he desires this end, but just because the end has to-be-pursuedness somehow built into it. (*Ethics*, p. 40)

Platonic Forms are admittedly supersensible. Therefore they are beyond empirical perception. Now suppose that they motivate us to act morally. That can be taken as the empirical justification for their existence. This line of thought seems to be in Mackie's mind in making the statement I just quoted. But he says that our knowledge of objective values never motivates us to act. Therefore there is no reason to assume their existence. This is Mackie's real argument against the existence of Platonic Forms. The same point can be made about all objective moral values: there are no objectively prescriptive moral values because they do not motivate us to act. The problem of motivation can complete the argument from queerness in the following way: it is queer to claim that there are objectively prescriptive moral values, because those values never guide our actions.

Mackie makes two additional points to supplement the argument from queerness. First, he introduces Hume's famous argument that reason cannot draw or

discover the principles of moral action. Mackie says, "The need for an argument of this sort [i.e., motivation or to-be-pursuedness] can be brought out by reflection on Hume's argument that 'reason'—in which at this stage he includes all sorts of knowing as well as reasoning—can never be an 'influencing motive of the will'" (*Ethics*, p. 40). Reason's inertness is Hume's famous claim. The objective moral values such as Plato's Form of the Good or Kant's Categorical Imperative are the objects or products of reason, but they cannot motivate people to act. So Mackie says that the theory of objective values is just philosophical fancy lacking reality.

Mackie now considers a possible objection to Hume: "Someone might object that Hume has argued unfairly from the lack of influencing power (not contingent upon desires) in ordinary objects of knowledge and ordinary reasoning, and might maintain that values differ from natural objects precisely in their power, when known, automatically to influence the will" (*Ethics*, p. 40). The objector will concede that Hume's claim on reason's powerlessness is true about the knowledge of natural objects, but not about the knowledge of values. The knowledge of values is different because it automatically influences the will to act. If we recognize a certain moral value, this realization influences our will to act. For example, if one recognizes that it is morally wrong to deceive other people, this person will try not to deceive others. Of course, the strength or endurance of will is an additional factor in his action. If his will is not strong enough, he may not always act in accordance with his knowledge. But the weakness of his will does not mean that he is not at all influenced by his knowledge. Hence the objector can say that moral knowledge automatically influences moral will and behavior. I think this objection to Hume raises a very important point, namely, the prescriptivity of moral values. Moral values are different from natural objects because of their prescriptivity. Although a morally weak person does not follow the demands of moral values, this does not mean that they have no

prescriptive force. In fact, the objector will hold, the prescriptive force is the essential feature of moral values and this force is the empirical proof for their existence, because we are affected by their prescriptive force.

After entertaining this objection to Hume, Mackie offers the following response on behalf of Hume:

> To this Hume could, and would need to, reply that this objection involves the postulating of value-entities or value-features of quite a different order from anything else with which we are acquainted, and of a corresponding faculty with which to detect them. That is, he would have to supplement his explicit argument with what I have called the argument from queerness. (*Ethics*, pp. 40-41)

Here Mackie is saying that the objection is based on the assumption that there are strange entities radically different from natural objects we are acquainted with and that we have a strange faculty to detect them. He believes that Hume can defeat this assumption with his argument from queerness. He talks as though this argument is iron-tight. In my view, he can make it iron-tight only by restricting the empirical ground of justification to external sense perception. By this restriction, any entities that transcend empirical perception can be ruled as non-existent. Even the question whether or not objective moral values can influence our moral will and behavior becomes irrelevant because moral sense is not external perception. Let us call it Mackie's argument from moral motivation. The outcome of this argument is to hold that moral motivation cannot be allowed as the empirical ground for the existence of objective moral values.

Since the argument from motivation is important, let us go over it once more. Mackie's reasoning is as follows:

> (1) Moral agents believe that their moral judgments are just subjective.
> (2) Their moral actions are not motivated by any objective moral values.
> (3) Therefore, there are no objectively prescriptive moral values.

Mackie's moral agents are obviously Humean moral agents. They do not believe in objective judgments or objective values. However, the moral objectivists must have a different view. Their reasoning must contain the following logic:

(1') Moral agents believe that their moral judgments are objective.
(2') Their moral actions are motivated by their objective moral values.
(3') Therefore, there are objectively prescriptive moral values.

If people really believe the existence of objective moral values—such as Kant's Categorical Imperative, Ten Commandments, etc.—they must be motivated by those values. Even in those cases where they do not act by those values, they should feel remorseful. Moral values make themselves felt by moral agents. Even if objective moral values are disavowed by Humean moral agents, their presence is attested by the experience of moral objectivists. Of course, Mackie believes that Humean agents are right, whereas the objectivists are wrong. But which of these two views is true of our ordinary experience? I believe that the objectivists' view explains our normal experience. Even Mackie describes the objectivists' view as our normal experience. That is his error theory. He says that the erroneous belief—i.e., the belief of objective moral values—is chronically embedded in our moral language and judgments. We normally believe and are motivated by the objective values as Mackie concedes. So his argument from moral motivation demonstrates that the objectivists are right. When it comes to the argument from moral motivation, his argument from queerness itself is queer. On one hand, he says that we normally believe and act by objective moral values. So, he describes us as objectivists. On the other, he says that our moral experience have nothing to do with the objective values. Here he regards us as Humean. This is the strange feature of his argument from queerness.

Regarding the problem of motivation, the moral objectivists can raise another objection. Mackie said that the objectivists' view "involves the postulating of value-entities or value-features of quite a different order from anything else with which we are acquainted, and of a corresponding faculty with which to detect them" (*Ethics*, pp. 40-41). He holds that the postulation is wrong. If the knowledge of moral values should not be different from any other knowledge, why does Mackie lay down a special requirement for the knowledge of moral values, namely, the requirement of motivation? An objectivist may say, "Objective moral values are out there like any other objects, while motivation is just a subjective problem, which has nothing to do with objective existence. That is, it is up to each individual whether or not he accepts and acts by the values." David O. Brink proposes an argument analogous to this one. He says that if moral values are regarded truly as objective, they do not necessarily motivate us to act. According to him,

> It is unlikely that the recognition of moral facts *necessarily* motivates or provides reasons for action; it is very unlikely that the recognition of moral facts *alone* necessarily motivates or provides reasons for action; and the mere recognition of moral facts almost certainly does not necessarily motivate or provide reasons for action *regardless of what the moral facts turn out to be*. Whether the recognition of moral facts motivates certainly depends upon what the moral facts are, and, at least on most plausible moral theories, whether recognition of these facts motivates is a matter of contingent (even if deep) psychological fact about the agent. Whether the recognition of moral facts provides reasons for action depends upon whether the agent has reasons to do what morality requires. But this, of course, depends upon what morality requires, i.e. upon what the moral facts are, and, at least on standard theories of reasons for action, whether recognition of these facts provides reason for action will depend upon contingent (even if deep) facts about the agent's desires or interests. ("Moral Realism and Skeptical Arguments," p. 114)

Internalism assures the motivation to act. But Brink says that moral realism need not stand on internalism.[3] Mackie's view on moral motivation makes sense only when

[3] Brink equates moral realism with moral objectivism. Frequently, they are treated as the same, as Brink does. But not necessarily. Moral objectivism holds that discovery of moral truth is a rational procedure, as found in Plato's or Kant's theory. On the other hand, moral

moral realism is linked to internalism. But this is not warranted. Brink says, "In claiming that moral facts would have to be objectively prescriptive, Mackie is claiming that moral realism requires the truth of *internalism*" ("Moral Realism and Skeptical Arguments," p. 113).

Richard Garner says that Mackie's argument from queerness can still be defended, although his own argument may not be successful. Garner says that Mackie's notion of "action-guiding" should not be equated with the motivational power,

> Brink's criticism of Mackie's use of the argument from queerness is not completely unwarranted. When explaining what it is for values to be both prescriptive and objective, Mackie alluded to Plato's Forms, and remarked that *seeing* them 'will not merely tell men what to do but will ensure that they do it, overruling any contrary inclinations'. (pp. 23-24) This is certainly motivational internalism of the strongest sort, independent moral facts with less power than that might still be held to be queer. Perhaps moral facts with *any* degree of intrinsic motivational power would be queer as well—the difference between a compulsion and a nudge may be only quantitative. This is why the only course for the externalist moral realist is to deny that moral properties and facts have *any* intrinsic motivational power. ("On the Genuine Queerness of Moral Properties and Facts," pp. 143-144)

Garner agrees that objective and prescriptive values do not necessarily arouse people to perform moral actions. Moral realism need not be linked to motivational internalism. Mackie is imposing too excessive condition on moral objectivism. This is why Mackie's argument from queerness is vulnerable to Brink's criticism. However, Garner claims that moral realism cannot be completely severed from some form of internalism. That is, moral realism traditionally has held that moral values offer an explanation or a justification for why people should carry out the actions that moral values recommend. This kind of internalism is called "reasons internalism."

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realism holds that there are external true moral values or properties. Although moral truth is objective to both of them, but they adopt a little bit different meaning of objectivity from each other. Further, Brink's opponent, Richard Garner, think moral realism is not necessarily an externalism.

(In fact, it is Brink who makes the distinction between motivational internalism and reasons internalism.)

Garner claims that moral realist's reasons internalism may be the real source of queerness. He says,

> Unfortunately for the moral realist, the queerness of being a property that is intrinsically motivating is not the only, or even the major facts exhibit. Another source of queerness emerges when we attend to the other half of Brink's formulation of intenralism. In addition to 'motivational internalism', there is also what he calls 'reasons internalism', the thesis that 'it is a priori that the recognition of moral facts itself necessarily provides the agent with reasons to perform the moral action. ("On the Genuine Queerness of Moral Properties and Facts," p. 142)

It is too much to ask that moral facts should motivate people to act. And moral realists do not necessarily argue for motivational realism. This is why Mackie's argument from queerness is not very persuasive. However, moral realism usually embraces the reasons internalism. And the realists' claim of justifying reason is the point exactly opposite to antirealism. Garner says,

> If a moral fact obtains, then we have a duty or a right to do something, which is to say that there is a legitimate and justifiable directive that *applies* to us, a directive that we can ignore or disobey, but one from which we cannot escape. The anti-realist says that this demand, however strongly felt, is no more than a projection of demands people make upon one another. The moral realist says that this is not enough, that the demands are in some sense independent of our moral feelings and beliefs, and responsible for them. ("On the Genuine Queerness of Moral Properties and Facts," p. 143)

Antirealists argue that people carry out moral actions by projecting their feelings into moral values or facts. Mackie must agree with this. But how can the antirealists' point be confirmed? Garner says,

> It is hard to believe in objective prescriptivity because it is hard to make sense of a demand without a demander, and hard to find a place for demands or demanders apart from human interests and conventions. We know what it is for our friends, our job, and our projects to make demands on us, but we do not know what it is for *reality* to do so. A black hole swallows everything, but it demands nothing. The only way to make sense of the demands of morality

> may be to see morality as a conventional social device, and its demands as ones we ourselves make. ("On the Genuine Queerness of Moral Properties and Facts," p. 143)

This is a typical argument by moral antirealists. They hold that moral values are created for smooth social relations among people, that is, they are not objective. Hence, so-called objective moral values have nothing to do with ordinary moral judgments and moral standards. This is what Mackie really wants to prove by his two arguments. In the next chapter, we will look into more of the notion of projection. Here I want to talk about it only briefly. No doubt the notion of projection is a good way of explaining how we practice moral actions or make moral judgments. We obviously project our feelings to external facts. But not all projected feelings or wants are right. When we want to determine whether they are right or wrong, we need to appeal to reason. This is to take a critical stance on morals. In particular, such critical reasoning is demanded when we establish or examine moral standards. So, it may be true in many cases that the so-called objective moral values play no role in our making daily moral judgments. However, the objectivist still can say that the objective moral values participate in molding and shaping conventional moral values and standards. Thus, even if many people believe that they do not experience any objective moral values, their experience does not disprove the existence of objective moral values. Hence, I think antirealists' account cannot explain how to grasp moral truth, although it can explain how we practice moral actions.

Mackie's second point to supplement the argument from queerness is the following:

> Another way of bringing out this queerness is to ask, about anything that is supposed to have some objective moral quality, how this is linked with its natural features. What is the connection between the natural fact that an action is a piece of deliberate cruelty—say, causing pain just for fun—and the moral fact that it is wrong? It cannot be an entailment, a logical or semantic necessity. Yet it is not merely that the two features occur together. The

> wrongness must somehow be 'consequential' or 'supervenient'; it is wrong because it is a piece of deliberate cruelty. (*Ethics*, p. 41)

Mackie is questioning the connection of objective moral quality to the natural world. For example, we say that it is cruel to torture small animals just for fun. If we analyze this judgment, torturing animals is a natural act which has nothing to do with either goodness or badness. It is our subjective response to regard the action as cruel. The relation between the natural fact and our subjective response is not "an entailment, a logical or semantic necessity." That is, the action of torturing is not necessarily cruel. It is our subjective response that makes the action cruel, according Mackie.

Mackie holds that the relationship between the objective action and the subjective response is best explained by supervenience. Our moral judgments are subjective responses supervening on objective activities that are morally neutral. Mackie holds that the objectivists must look upon the relationship as necessary entailment. Since moral qualities are embedded in the actions, our responses are right if we catch the qualities. But the objectivist's account has a problem, according to Mackie. The objectivist must say that we have a specific kind of intuition that not only discerns the objective qualities, but also connect them to natural features. He questions, "Alternatively, the intuition required might be the perception that wrongness is a higher order property belonging to certain natural properties, and how can we discern it?" (*Ethics*, p. 41) Thus, the objectivist's argument relying on intuition cannot explain how we make moral judgments, whereas his alternative can. He says, "How much simpler and more comprehensible the situation would be if we could replace the moral quality with some sort of subjective response which could be

causally related to the detection of the natural features on which the supposed quality is said to be consequential" (*Ethics*, p. 41).

Probably, what Mackie says here may be true in the case of immediate moral responses. When we see boys torturing a little animal, our immediate response would be to say, "Don't do that. It is wrong." This case well explains how our moral judgment supervenes on natural acts. However, there is another way of making moral judgments, which involves reflection. When we deliberate or debate on the rightness or wrongness of a moral issue—such as abortion—we do not rely on an immediate judgment or a specific incidence. We may examine various views and relevant facts before drawing a conclusion. Without this kind of reflection, we can hardly reach moral agreements or build community standards. Both the immediate and the reflective ways are equally indispensable for our moral life. Each has its own role and function. But when it comes to the attainment of moral truth, it is unlikely that we can rely on immediate responses. There are many different or even conflicting moral responses. Then, moral truth does not supervene on natural facts although immediate responses do. Because Mackie's second point is based on immediate responses, it cannot count against objective moral values.

Mackie's argument is based on ordinary moral experience. It may be true that we usually do not rely on objective moral values in our moral judgments or conducts. As he says, conventional standards would be enough for estimating rightness and wrongness of our ordinary moral judgments. However, these facts do not necessarily disprove the existence of objective moral values. In critical cases, the conventional standards are challenged or revised. In these cases, people have to appeal to higher

principles than their conventional standards. When people come to distrust their basic moral standards, their society is likely to fall into a turmoil or chaos. For example, during the French Revolution, the people could not solve their social problem by appealing to their conventional standards. They had to appeal to higher ideals such as liberty, equality, and fraternity. These values went against the established conventions and traditions. Also, when people construct their community standards, they have to think about the best solution for the whole society. Again they have to appeal to higher principles such as equality or fairness. These objective values alone can provide the foundation for the construction of community standards.

If the argument from queerness is successful, the so-called objectively prescriptive moral values will turn out to be illusory. Mackie says that the objective values are just "products of philosophical fancy" (*Ethics*, p. 41). If those values are illusory, would they not make the first order morality also illusory? I have already pointed out that the first order cannot be so easily insulated from the second order as Mackie claims. How can he forestall the spread of his skepticism from the second to the first order? This is Mackie's anxiety over ordinary morality. He tries to dissolve it in the following statement:

> It may be thought that the argument from queerness is given an unfair start if we thus relate it to what are admittedly among the wilder products of philosophical fancy—Platonic Forms, non-natural qualities, self-evident relations of fitness, faculties of intuitions, and the like. Is it equally forceful if applied to the terms in which everyday moral judgments are more likely to be expressed—though still . . . with a claim to objectivity—'you must do this', 'you can't do that', 'obligation', 'unjust', 'rotten', 'disgraceful', 'mean', or talk about good reasons for or against possible actions? Admittedly not; but that is because the objective prescriptivity, the element a claim for whose authoritativeness is embedded in ordinary moral thought and language, is not yet isolated in these forms of speech, but is presented along with relations to desires and feelings, reasoning about the means to desired ends, interpersonal

> demands, the injustice which consists in the violation of what are in the context the accepted standards of merit, the psychological constituents of meanness, and so on. There is nothing queer about any of these, and under cover of them the claim of moral authority may pass unnoticed. (*Ethics*, pp. 41-42)

Although the objective values are products of philosophical fancy, Mackie holds, our ordinary moral judgments are still objective not because they are linked to the objectively prescriptive values, but because these judgments contain relations to desires and feelings, or moral demands required by the accepted moral standards. To put it another way, the objectivity of the first order morality is not derived from the objectivity of objective values of the second order. It is rooted in our desires, feelings, or standards. For example, when a person says, "It is unjust to do X," this judgment can be objective if it expresses the person's desires and feelings, or the requirement of his community standards. His desires and feelings and his community standards are all objective and they make his moral judgment objective.

Mackie's notion of objectivity is very peculiar because we usually regard the judgments based on wants and desires as subjective. By "objective" he seems to mean "actual" or "real." To say that desires, wants, and community standards are objective means nothing more than that they are actual or real, that is, they are not phantoms or philosophical fantasies like Platonic Forms or non-natural properties. Moral judgments linked to community standards or wants and desires are objective because the latter are necessary part of actual life. Mackie further says that the evaluation of moral judgments is possible by relying on community standards. And he stresses that the community standards are conventional standards that have nothing to do with the objectively prescriptive values. Without the objective values, it is probable that the standards are determined arbitrarily or that they are frequently changing. But Mackie says that this kind of disaster will not happen.

> The subjectivist may try to make his point by insisting that there is no objective validity about the choice of standards. Yet he would clearly be

> wrong if he said that the choice of even the most basic standards in any field was completely arbitrary. (*Ethics*, p. 27)

Mackie does not fully explain why the choice of standards cannot be arbitrary. Instead, he gives an example of the standards for sheepdog contest to illustrate how non-arbitrary standards can be chosen (*Ethics*, p. 27). He admits that there is no determinate standard for judging goodness of dogs in general. Everyone may have a different standard for the canine excellence. But there are definite standards for evaluating sheepdogs, and those standards are determined by the breeders' desires and ends. The qualities they expect from good sheepdogs can shape the standards. Likewise, people's desire and goal for the good community life are, Mackie holds, conducive to choosing non-arbitrary community standards. These standards can, once established, take over objective phase of moral life. He says, "Given any sufficiently determinate standards, it will be an objective issue, a matter of truth and falsehood, how well any particular specimen measures up to those standards" (*Ethics*, p.26).

According to Mackie, the community standards are like the sheepdog standards rather than the standards for dogs in general. The sheepdogs are specialized, whereas the dogs in general are not. We can make a similar distinction for human societies. We can talk about general standards for all human societies or society in general and special standards for specialized societies. Sparta is a good example of a specialized society. It was designed as a war machine. For the evaluation of such specialized societies, we can have some definite standards. Another example is a highly technological society, whose primary purpose is the most effective industrial production. Again we can have definite standards for its evaluation. But we can find no more definite standards for evaluating society in general than the standards for evaluating dogs in general. But Mackie believes that the standards for evaluating society in general are as definite as the sheepdog standards. He can do so only by ruling out certain forms of society such as tyranny and slavery as unacceptable social

orders. By doing so he is implicitly assuming that there are certain basic values indispensable for the formation of decent human social order. Those values are as selective as the selection of values for sheepdog breeding. Let us call them the basic social values. Are they objective values or merely subjective preferences? This is the most critical question for Mackie's theory on objective values.

Objectification and Categorical Imperative

Mackie is not content in merely proving that people have the erroneous belief about objective values. He wants to explain how they come to have this erroneous belief. He holds that the belief in objective moral values comes from people's tendency of objectifying positive moral rules. He describes two patterns of objectification. First of all, moral rules are objectified due to our attitudes to spread our feelings into the objects. He says, "If we admit what Hume calls the mind's 'propensity to spread itself on external objects', we can understand the supposed objectivity of moral attitudes as arising from what we can call the projection or objectification of moral attitudes" (*Ethics*, p. 42). Mackie argues further that there is a good reason for this projection. Morality works basically for better relations among people. Concrete moral rules are established for this purpose. And there is a demand and a pressure to internalize the rules. If no authority is attached to the rules, it is likely that people would neither accept the rules nor regulate their behavior by them. Mackie says that this need provides a reason for the objectification. He says, "[Objective] validity would give them the authority required" (*Ethics*, p. 43).

According to Mackie, moral values actually depend on wants and desires. He introduces Hobbes's view on the priority of desires.

> As Hobbes says, 'whatsoever is the object of any man's Appetite or Desire, that is it, which he for his part calleth Good'; and certainly both the objective 'good' and the noun 'goods' are used in non-moral contexts of things because

> they are such as to satisfy desires. We get the notion of something's being objectively good, or having intrinsic value, by reversing the direction of dependence here, by making the desire depend upon the good ness, instead of the goodness on the desire. (*Ethics*, p. 43)

The error consists in reversing the relation between wants and desire on one hand and moral values or goodness on the other. The truth is that so-called objective values or goodness depend on subjective wants and desires. For instance, when someone says, "You ought to do this" or "You must do that," this statement is actually what the speaker wants the other to do, not that it has objective value. Mackie says that this want of the speaker—or someone else's—accounts for the true nature of the categorical imperative.

Mackie says that there are two ways of distinguishing categorical imperatives from hypothetical imperatives (*Ethics*, pp. 27-28). The first one is a grammatical distinction. If an ought-statement is not accompanied with an if-clause, the statement is categorical. If it is, the statement is hypothetical. Mackie says that Kant relies on this grammatical distinction. But the grammatical distinction sometimes cannot show what categorical imperative really is. Not all categorical imperatives in the grammatical form can be absolute commands, because the implied conditions and implied desires can be unstated or suppressed. For example, an objectified statement like "You ought not to kill another human being" is a categorical imperative in its grammatical form. However, if there is an implied reason of the speaker, such as, "If you don't want to be imprisoned" the imperative is not categorical, according to Mackie. The converse is also true. He says, "Not every conditional ought-statement or command, then, is a hypothetical imperative; equally, not every non-conditional one is a categorical imperative" (*Ethics*, p. 28). For example, "If you promised to do Y, you ought to do Y" (*Ethics*, p. 28) is a categorical imperative although if-clause is contained in the sentence.

The second distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperative is dependent on the speaker's desire or implied reason. Mackie says, "The moral categorical imperative which could be expressed in the same words can be seen as resulting from the suppression of the conditional clause in a hypothetical imperative without its being replaced by any such references to the speaker's want" (*Ethics*, p. 44). If the speaker conceals his desire in uttering a categorical imperative of the grammatical form, it is not truly a categorical imperative. Mackie says, "Again, an imperative remains hypothetical even if we change the 'if' to 'since': the fact that the desire for X is actually present does not alter the fact that the reason for doing Y is contingent upon the desire for X by way of Y's being a means to X" (*Ethics*, p. 29). Thus, Mackie expands the realm of hypothetical imperative by adding since-clause to it. For example, "You ought not to tell lies to your friends since I don't want to see anyone deceived" is a hypothetical imperative, according to Mackie. "You ought not to tell lies to your friends if you don't want to have troubles with them" is, of course, a hypothetical imperative. The since-clause and the if-clause in each statement may carry out the same function, according to Mackie. That is, the speakers' command in each clause is dependent upon their desires.

Mackie holds that all categorical imperatives have unstated desires. Therefore, they are really hypothetical imperatives. No categorical imperative is free of implied reason, that is, the speaker' wants and desires. When a person utters a statement of categorical imperative, we can ask him why he says it. Then, he must give his reason for saying that statement. Mackie says, "[T]here may be a reference to the purposes of someone else, perhaps the speaker; 'You must do this'—'Why?'—'Because I want such-and such'" (*Ethics*, p. 44). The speakers' wants and desires are not necessarily self-interests. The imperatives are likely to represent social demands as moral rules and judgments usually do (*Ethics*, p. 43). So, although the speakers objectify their

wants and desires to support social demands, their wants and desires are frequently concealed. Mackie further argues that there is an advantage of this concealment. By concealing the speaker's wants, moral rules look as if they were general or objective demands (*Ethics*, p. 44). He concludes that so-called categorical imperative is actually hypothetical imperative because the command is an expression of the agent's wants and desires.

A question arises: is it impossible that there exists categorical imperative independent of wants and desires? At least, Kant's notion of categorical imperative is not just imperative without conditional clause or imperative with hidden desire. He says that it is a command of reason. And it is a moral command to guide rational beings' conducts of their own, not a positive command to direct other people's activity. To Kant, a statement like "You ought not to kill other human being" does not hide wants and desires of controlling others' behavior. Mackie seems to think that there might be such categorical imperative, but it has nothing to do with our actual moral actions and judgments. He says,

> Now Kant himself held that moral judgements are categorical imperatives, or perhaps are all applications of one categorical imperative, and it can plausibly maintained at least that many moral judgements contain a categorically imperative element. So far as ethics is concerned, my thesis that there are no objective values is specifically the denial that any such categorically imperative element is objectively valid. The objective values which I am denying would be action directing absolutely, not contingently (in the way indicated) upon the agents desires and inclinations. (*Ethics*, p. 29)

According to Mackie, categorical imperative is not objectively valid. It can neither direct our actions, nor motivate us to act because it contains no wants and desires. This is the same point that he argues against Platonic Forms. He may want to say that Kant's categorical imperative is another philosophical fancy. Mackie does not say that we cannot have categorical imperative, but that it has nothing to do with actual moral activities. For this reason, categorical imperative is not objectively valid.

A hypothetical imperative does not necessarily express selfish interests. It sometimes contains the speaker's wants and desires to support social demands. Mackie concedes this point. He says, "Again this move [i.e., concealment of conditional clause] can be understood when we remember that at least our central and basic moral judgements represent social demands, where the source of the demand is indeterminate and diffuse" (*Ethics*, p. 44). Moreover, he claims that the concealment of conditional clauses has one advantage. It does not specify who actually demand the moral requirements. The imperatives can convey what the society wants although they are uttered by specific persons. He says, "The speaker is expressing demands which he makes as a member of a community, which he has developed in and by participation in a joint way of life; also, what is required of this particular agent would be required of any other in a relevantly similar situation; but the agent too is expected to have internalized the relevant demands, to act as if the ends for which the action is required were his own" (*Ethics*, p. 44). Mackie further says that this way of boosting social demands employs objectification. He says, "By suppressing any explicit reference to demands and making the imperatives categorical we facilitate conceptual moves from one such demand relation to another. The moral uses of such words as 'must' and 'ought' and 'should', all of which are used also to express hypothetical imperatives, are traces of this pattern of objectification" (*Ethics*, p. 44).

Mackie's theory conflicts with the commonsense view that moral commands are categorical imperatives. If all moral commands are just hypothetical, it is hard to distinguish moral commands form others like prudential commands. He may reply that we can distinguish moral commands from prudential commands by the speaker's hidden wants and desires, because moral imperatives contains stated or unstated dependent clause. For example,

> (a) You ought not to steal others' property (since I am rich and I do not want to get my property stolen).

(b) You ought not to steal others' property (since I do not want to see people steal from each other).

We can see that (b) is moral and (a) is not. In (a) the dependent clause expresses the speaker's selfish or prudential desire. The dependent clause in (b) represents the speaker's desire which is not egoistic or prudential. But (b) may not be fully moral because the since-clause expresses the speaker's personal value. Although the speaker in (b) does not think about the loss of his personal property, he still has an individual concern. If so, we can have another command such as:

(c) You ought not to steal others' property (since social disorder results from the acts of stealing each other).

Command (c) shows a higher degree of morality than (a) and (b), because (c) does not contain the speaker's personal or prudential wants and desires at all. It is uttered from a neutral perspective, not from the speaker's biased interests. Then, why is (c) not a categorical imperative? Mackie would still say that (c) is a hypothetical imperative because it implies personal wants and desires as a community member. That is, moral imperatives like (c) are objectified from personal wants into social demands. To Mackie, the speaker wants to say that imperative because the members of a society internalize the imperatives as moral rules. He says that the people share common ways of life, so that they need moral rules to facilitate the relations among them. This is his instrumental view of morality, which reduces all moral imperatives to hypothetical imperatives.

It is true that moral considerations and judgments are concerned with how one should behave in a community. No one leads his life without relations with other people. If we live like Robinson Crusoe in a desert island, we need not talk about moral relations with other people. Thus, moral commands must have something to do with social demands. But if this is the condition for hypothetical imperative, it is too loose and too broad. If categorical imperatives collapse to hypothetical imperatives

this way, I think at least two problems arise. First, moral statements are not clearly distinguished from prudential statements. If (a), (b), and (c) above are all hypothetical imperatives, moral statements are basically the same as prudential ones. However, Mackie thinks morality is more than prudence. For example, he says, "One moral that we might be inclined to draw from the game theory is that prudence is not enough, that the rational calculation of long-term self-interest is not sufficient in itself to men to make mutually beneficial agreement or, once made, to keep them" (*Ethics*, pp. 119-120). Even if he thinks moral statements are different from prudential ones, he provides no measure to distinguish them.

Next, although Mackie emphasizes that there are no categorical imperatives, he sometimes says the opposite. For example, he says, "'If you promised to do Y, you ought to do Y' is not a hypothetical imperative merely on account of the stated if-clause; what is meant may be either a hypothetical or categorical imperative, depending upon the implied reason for keeping the supposed promise" (*Ethics*, p. 28). In this quote, he is saying that the imperative can be categorical by the implied reason. There is another piece of textual evidence that Mackie cannot completely deny the existence of categorical imperative. When he criticizes naturalism, he says that this view neglects "categorical quality" of moral statements as follows:

> On a naturalist analysis, moral judgements can be practical, but their practicality is wholly relative to desires or possible satisfactions of the person or persons whose actions are to be guided; but moral judgements seem to say more than this. This view leaves out the categorical quality of moral requirements. In fact both naturalist and non-cognitive analyses leave out the apparent authority of ethics, the one by excluding the categorically imperative aspect, the other the claim to objective validity of truth. (*Ethics*, p. 33)

If all imperatives are just hypothetical, what does he mean by "categorical quality of moral requirements" or "categorically imperative aspect?" I think even Mackie cannot explain the nature of moral commands without relying on the notion of categorical imperative. If categorical imperative is not reduced to hypothetical

imperatives, his argument denying categorical imperative loses its cogency. Contrary to his intention, categorical imperative is not just an objectification or projection of wants and desires. Overall Mackie's argument about categorical imperative is caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, he boosts his skepticism by rejecting categorical imperative. But this move cannot explain the true nature of moral commands. On the other hand, when he approves categoricity of moral statements, his skepticism is severely damaged.

So far, I have discussed Mackie's first pattern of objectification and its problem. The second pattern is this: moral values are objectified after the source or the legislator of moral rules was removed. He says,

> Another way of explaining the objectification of moral values is to say that ethics is a system of law from which the legislator has been removed. This might have been derived either from the positive law of a state or from a supposed system of divine law. There can be no doubt that some features of modern European moral concepts are traceable to the theological ethics of Christianity. (*Ethics*, p. 45)

According to him, some features of current moral rules originated from old positive laws or the divine law. The controversial sources are forgotten, but we are prone to think the moral rules are absolute commands. Authority of moral rules survives the credibility of their sources. For example, many moral concepts are actually rooted in the divine law of Christianity. Although Christianity no longer dominates our secular life, a lot of people want to regard the moral rules as uncontroversial. The moral rules are objectified by forgetting their origins. The laws often forbid committing some actions. According to Mackie, it is not strange that modern moral concepts share the feature of forbidding. He says, "The stress on quasi-imperative notions, on what ought to be done or on what is wrong in a sense that is close to that of 'forbidden', are surely relics of divine commands" (*Ethics*, p.45). He holds that the imperatives of "forbidden" or "ought" need not be the center of ethics. Plato's and Aristotle's ethics

deal primarily with "good." There is no necessity that ethics deal with "ought" instead of "good." Why have the ought-imperatives played the central role in European ethics? This is the legacy of Christianity. The imperatives are rooted from the divine law. Probably, people may not know that the modern moral concepts including the ought-imperatives are derived from the old divine law.

Mackie's view that modern moral concepts are theoretically linked to the divine law may be true. What he wants to demonstrate is that modern moral concepts or the belief in objective values are just relics of old tradition. But his demonstration is not a philosophical account. That is, he does not show whether or not the belief in objective moral values is wrong, but gives how the belief has been presented throughout history. Even if modern moral concepts originate from the divine law, the belief in objective moral values can be defended as follows: the divine law was the expression of the belief in the medieval times, and the moral concepts are the expression of the belief in modern times. In other words, modern moral concepts may not be caused by the old divine law. Both modern moral concepts and the divine laws are the reflections of the belief in objective moral values. This point can be applied to Mackie's first pattern of objectification. That is, even if we have the tendency of spreading words, this does not indicate that categorical imperative is just an objectification of positive laws. Rather, both categorical imperative and positive laws may express our belief in objective values.

Mackie's First-order Ethics

In the second part of the *Ethics*, Mackie deals with the first-order ethics. He says that the tasks of moral philosophy is to systematically "describe our own moral consciousness or some part of it such as our 'sense of justice', to find some set of principles which were themselves fairly acceptable to us and with which, along with

their practical consequences and applications, our 'intuitive' (but really subjective) detailed moral judgements would be in 'reflective equilibrium'" (*Ethics*, p. 105). According to him, an important point we have to keep in mind is: "Morality is not to be discovered but to be made: we have to decide what moral views to adopt, what moral stands to take" (*Ethics*, p. 106).

In the creation of morality and moral principles, there is an important distinction, according to Mackie. That is the distinction between morality in the broad sense and morality in the narrow sense. He says, "A morality in the broad sense would be a general, all-inclusive theory of conducts: the morality to which someone subscribed would be whatever body of principles he allowed ultimately to guide or determine his choices of action" (*Ethics*, p. 106). Most of traditional ethical theories come with a set of principles or commands that constrain human conducts regardless of specific circumstances or independent of self-interests. Kant's categorical imperative is a good example presenting the morality in the broad sense. Also, the Greatest Happiness Principle delivers the same sense of morality as long as the principle requires us to work for the general happiness.

In contrast, morality in the narrow sense is designed to constrain the extreme pursuit of individual's inclinations and desires. Mackie explains the narrow-sense morality as follows:

> In the narrow sense, a morality is a system of particular sort of constraints on conduct—ones whose central task is to protect the interests of persons other than the agent and which present themselves to an agent as checks on his natural inclinations or spontaneous tendencies to act. In this narrow sense, moral considerations would be considerations from some limited range, and would not necessarily include everything that a man allowed to determine what he did. In this second sense, someone could say quite deliberately, 'I admit that morality requires that I should do such-and-such, but I don't intend to: for me other considerations here overrule the moral ones.' (*Ethics*, p. 106)

The narrow-sense morality is just to constrain extreme pursuit of selfish goals, which causes the conflicts with others or the ends of cooperative schemes. Unlike the broad-

sense morality, it does not aim at realizing moral ideals, but protecting the interests of the agent and others. There is another difference between the two moralities. Morality in the narrow sense does not try to tell the agents what he ought to do in every situation. The morality in the broad sense tries to perform this global function. But morality in the narrow sense is an agent-centered ethical view allowing a considerable leeway for agents' decisions. Instead of giving strict universal moral rules to observe, the narrow-sense morality respects the agents' decision in each case. Morality in the narrow sense trusts the agents and their moral sense. Mackie says, "'Moral sense' or 'intuition' is an initially more plausible description of what supplies many of our basic moral judgements than 'reason'" (*Ethics*, p. 38). The agents inspired by the narrow-sense morality are supposed to take into account various relevant information in making their judgments and decisions. Furthermore, they need not take into account only moral considerations when they make moral judgments. Mackie's moral agent can even say, "I admit that morality requires that I should do such-and-such, but I don't intend to: for me other considerations here overrule the moral ones" (*Ethics*, p. 106).

Morality in the broad sense is unlimited because it covers all our decisions and actions. On the other hand, morality in the narrow sense is highly limited. It is only one region of human existence. What lies outside the domain of morality is the non-moral domain. But there can no non-moral domain under morality in the broad sense because it covers the entire human existence. Mackie calls morality in the broad sense the ethics of fantasy (*Ethics*, 129). An example of such an ethic is Plato's ethics. The ethics of fantasy rests on the philosophical fantasy of objective values. Therefore, they can never become practical ethics of real societies because they are too utopian. Mackie admits that morality in the broad sense has played a major role in traditional ethical theories. But he also claims that it must fail as a practical system of conduct.

He believes that the ethics of real world is always some form of morality in the narrow sense. The function of this limited morality is to constrain excessive selfish desires for the protection of the general well-being of a community. It is possible that a general theory of conduct can be constructed on the basis of the morality in the narrow sense. As an example of this kind, Mackie mentions John Rawls' theory of justice (*Ethics*, p. 105).

In the second part of the *Ethics*, Mackie does not try to build his own general theory of conduct. Instead, he focuses on the importance of morality in the narrow sense. In particular, he presents four theories rightly employing the notion of morality in the narrow sense: G. J. Warnock's theory, Protagoras's view of morality, Hobbes's contract theory, Hume's theory. In particular, Mackie thinks the game of Prisoners' Dilemma provides a concise analysis of moral circumstances and confirms his view of morality in the narrow sense. First, Mackie introduces Warnock's view of morality as follows: human relations and affairs are likely to go badly because of various limitations such as "limited resources, limited information, limited intelligence, limited rationality, but above all limited sympathies" (*Ethics*, p. 108). Due to the limitations and selfish ends of individual human beings, they sometimes show hostility and malevolence to one another. Thus, Mackie says, "[To Warnock] [t]he function of morality is primarily to counteract this limitation of men's sympathies" (*Ethics*, p. 108).

Similarly, Protagoras gives an account of human circumstance and morality in Plato's *Progagoras*. According to Progagoras, human beings have physically weaker and less capable in surviving in nature than other animals. To make up for the weakness, humans live together in small groups. But this is not enough to overcome their weakness. Because they do not have political talent, they compete or fight with each other. Zeus is pitiful of humans, so that he sends Hermes to give human beings

law, justice, and moral sense. In the end, humans can form cities and societies and shield their weakness. Mackie says, "Protagoras's thesis is plain: a moral sense, law, and justice are needed to enable men to live together in communities large enough to compete successfully with the wild beasts" (*Ethics*, p. 108). Protagoras's analogy implies that morality does not exist for its own sake. It is needed to promote other values like survival or prosperity of the whole society.

Mackie also mentions Hobbes's moral and political theory as another example of morality in the narrow sense. As is well known, Hobbes regards the basic human circumstance as a war of all against all. Human beings in the natural state fight and compete against one another. Each person's overall capacity is more or less equal. So everyone in the state of nature is exposed to danger and threat coming from other human beings. For the fear of death and the desire to security, human beings want to have peace. So they make an agreement to limit their competition and to transfer their natural right to the sovereignty. Hobbes invokes the laws of nature to justify his notion of agreement and the political power of the sovereign. Positive laws are enacted by the sovereign to limit the competitive claims and to maintain peace. Also, the sovereign has the power to punish those who break the agreement. Thus, moral and political obligations towards the sovereign and society originate from social contract. Mackie says, "The essential device is a form of agreement which provides for its own enforcement" (*Ethics*, p. 109). To Hobbes, morality comes from the attempt of resolving fear of death, security, survival, or benefits from keeping promises. Hobbes presents a moral view analogous to Mackies'. The function of morality is to secure mutual benefits among people. Hume advocates a similar idea of morality. He says that justice is an artificial virtue that arises from human selfishness, limited generosity, and moderate scarcity. According to Hume, if humans would be absolutely benevolent or if each human being acts only for the happiness of all, there

would be no need to enhance and enforce the rules for justice. Similarly, if nature would provide us food and other goods abundantly, there would be no need to talk about justice. In the circumstance of moderate scarcity, human beings are basically selfish and have limitedly sympathy for others. This human condition is likely to ruin mutually beneficial cooperation. So, morality or justice is a device to offset the limited sympathy and selfishness.

Mackie draws the same idea of morality from the game theory known as Prisoners' Dilemma. The game situation he sets goes as follows: Tom and Dan are two soldiers defending their posts in cooperation. If each of them stays in his post and keeps fighting, they can repel the enemy and survive the battle. If one of them runs away, the deserter must survive unscathed, but the other must die, so that they cannot defend their posts. The last possibility is that both of them run away. So their mission will be failed and they will be reprimanded although they can save their lives. Based on these possible cases, a game of Prisoners' Dilemma can be built as follows:

	Tom		
Dan		STAY (T-s)	RUN (T-r)
	STAY (D-s)	(5, 5)	(-10, 10)
	RUN (D-r)	(10, -10)	(0, 0)

(The numbers represent each person's utility level. Their sizes are arbitrary, and they are not comparable between persons. For instance, we cannot say that Utile 10 of Dan is bigger than Utile 5 of Tom, but Utile 10 of Dan is bigger than Utile 5 of Dan.

Also, each pair of numbers shows the utility of both Dan and Tom respectively. Thus, the pair (10, -10) indicates Utile 10 of Dan and Utile -10 of Tom.)

In this game, RUN—i.e., D-r and T-r—is a dominant strategy to Dan and Tom, since 10 is bigger than 5 and 0 bigger than -10. The outcome is that two soldiers run away, and their cooperation is broken. In general, if the parties joined in a cooperative scheme try to maximize their own satisfactions, every cooperative scheme will break down. Without keeping promises, even the whole society will be destroyed. Thus, we need a method to ensure the parties to keep their promises. Hobbes claims that we need a sovereign to whom people transfer their political rights including the right to punish violators. On the other hand, many believe that we need to educate people in order to maintain social institutions and cooperative plans. Mackie says that this game theory presents the same perspective about morality as Hobbes, Hume, Protagoras, and Warnock.

> But from our point of view the game theory approach merely reinforces the lessons that we have extracted from the arguments of Protagoras, Hobbes, Hume, and Warnock. The main moral is the practical value of the notion of obligation, of an invisible and indeed fictitious tie or bond, whether this takes the form of a general requirement to keep whatever agreements one makes or of various specific duties like those of military honour or of loyalty to comrades or to an organization. (*Ethics*, p. 119)

All these theories show that there is an inherent tension between the pursuit of self-interests and the benefit of the whole society. The function of morality is to constrain excessive pursuit of self-interests and to counteract individual's limited sympathies. So, the promise-keeping has been focused as one of the most important moral issues.

The theories Mackie introduces basically hold that morality is designed to solve the conflict of interests. So, morality is man-made and dependent on individual and collective benefits. Morality is necessary only for the harmonious pursuit of interests among people. Mackie also examines traditional theories of normative ethics in terms of the distinction—i.e., morality in the narrow sense and morality in the

broad sense. He concludes that ethical theories are not viable if they abandon morality in the narrow sense.

First, Mackie says that utilitarianism can be interpreted either as a morality in the narrow sense or as a morality in the broad sense. If utilitarianism is taken as a morality in the broad sense, each person is supposed to act to promote the greatest happiness of all. But Mackie says that this is impossible.

> Suppose, first, that [utilitarianism] is considered as a morality in the broad sense, as an all-inclusive theory of conduct. Then, when utility or the general happiness is proposed as the immediate criterion of right action, is it intended that each agent should take the happiness of all as his goal? This, surely, is too much to expect. (*Ethics*, p. 129)

According to Mackie, Mill expects such a criticism, and says that the criticism confuses the rule of action with the motive of it.

> 'The great majority of good actions,' [Mill] said, 'are intended not . . . travel beyond the particular persons concerned, except so far as is necessary to assure himself that in benefiting them he is not violating the rights, that is, the legitimate and authorized expectations, of any one else.' (*Ethics*, p. 129)

Mill is saying that utilitarian principle prescribes not the individual's motive of action, but the criterion for evaluating the outcome of his action. In other words, utilitarianism does not provide how each person should act, but what actions are right. Mackie says that even if Mill's claim is true, the requirement by utilitarianism—i.e., the standard of right action—is impractical. Mackie says,

> We cannot require that the actions of people generally should even pass the test of being such as to maximize the happiness of all, whether or not this is their motive. Even within a small village or commune it is too much to expect that the efforts of all members should be wholly directed towards the promoting of the well-being of all. And such total cooperation is out of the question on the scale of a nation state, let alone where the 'all' are to be the whole human race, including its future or possible future members, and perhaps all other sentient beings as well. . . . All real societies, and all those which it is of direct practical use to consider, are ones whose members have to a great extent divergent and conflicting purposes, and consequently will not only not be motivated by a desire for the general happiness but also will

> commonly fail the proposed test of being such as to maximize the general happiness. (*Ethics*, p. 130)

Mackie points out the fact that people have diverse and conflicting interests. It is too much to expect that their actions should be judged by the utilitarian principle. He concludes that utilitarianism as a morality in the broad sense provides nothing about how people are motivated to act and fails to establish the standard of right actions. He says, "Act utilitarianism is by no means the only moral theory that displays this extreme of impracticality" (*Ethics*, p. 130). Ten Commandments and universal prescriptivism—i.e., Hare's ethical theory—are other examples of claiming such an extreme practicality (*Ethics*, pp. 130 -131). Mackie's estimation of morality in the broad sense is well expressed in the following passage:

> To put forward as a morality in the broad sense something which, even if it were admirable, would be an utterly impossible ideal is likely to do, and surely has in fact done, more harm than good. It encourages the treatment of moral principles not as guides to action but as a fantasy which accompanies actions with which it is quite incompatible. It is a commonplace that religious morality often has little effect on the lives of believers. It is equally true, though not so frequently pointed out, that utilitarian morality is often treated as a topic of purely academic discussion, and is not taken any more seriously as a practical guide. (*Ethics*, pp. 131-132)

Mackie claims that utilitarianism makes sense if it is interpreted as a morality in the narrow sense. He says about how utilitarianism can be interpreted as a theory of morality in the narrow sense.

> It is not now being proposed that an agent should either take the general happiness as his overriding aim or act as if he were doing so, but only that he should give it some weight against the more special interests to which he is primarily attached. (*Ethics*, pp. 134-135)

That is, the utilitarian principle can not serve as the standard of right actions, but as a constraint checking agents' pursuit of undue desires. The idea is that we occasionally pay attention to the utilitarian principle to curb excessive pursuit of self-interests. Of course, this interpretation of utilitarianism is not free of problems, according to Mackie. He asks: "how much weight [on the utilitarian principle]? When should the

one consideration override the other?" (*Ethics*, p. 135) Utilitarianism gives no answer to the question, as Mackie says. However, utilitarianism can still be a theory of morality in the narrow sense, he insists, if it holds that the utilitarian principle need not be directly pursued every time. Mackie finds evidence for his interpretation in Mill's own account of justice. Mill admits that notions of justice do not square with the utilitarian principle. Mill acknowledges that there are many situations in which justice should be observed regardless of maximizing happiness of all. Mackie says,

> Mill recognizes that there are certain principles not indeed wholly determinate nor quite invariable from one society to another, but still far more determinate than an expression of a general propensity to show concern for the welfare of all, which play a more vital part than any such general propensity either does or can play in checking the bad effects of limited sympathies. Unlike it, the rules of justice do set a boundary to the pursuit of specific goals. (*Ethics*, pp. 135-136)

Mill admits that each society has certain principles—like rules of justice—setting "a boundary to the pursuit of specific goals." And he also agrees that these principles come prior to the utilitarian principle. If Mill is describing how utilitarianism should be, his utilitarianism can be a theory of morality in the narrow sense.

A consequence of adopting morality in the narrow sense is that we will have a very flexible moral system. Moral rules do not bind our activities, but function only as constraints on extreme selfish behaviors. Mackie calls this the "malleability of morality." He says, "We are, then, free to mould or remould our moral system so as better to promote what ever it is that we do value" (*Ethics*, p. 146).

In the same vein, Mackie argues that non-utilitarian consequentialism and deontology are not viable as the theories of morality in the broad sense. Mackie also claims that non-utilitarianism and deontology may not be very different from each other. According to him,

> Indeed I find very great difficulty in distinguishing and separating these. For example, I should take as one component of the good to be realized the non-

> existence of extreme unfairness in the distribution of advantages among persons. But the fairness or unfairness of a distribution cannot be completely distinguished from the fairness or unfairness of the procedures and actions that have led to that distribution, and yet cannot be completely identified with these either. But fairness of distribution would be a non-utilitarian consequential good, while the fairness of procedures and actions would fall naturally under deontology. (*Ethics*, pp. 149-150)

It is true that a desirable consequence cannot be attained without a proper procedure. So, Mackie says that what consequentialism wants to achieve may not be separable from what deontology wants to promote. Their difference is slight, according to him.

> What deontology can do, while consequentialism cannot, is to make actions described in terms of such special relations to the agent obligatory or wrong as such. (*Ethics*, p. 158)

He appears to think that consequentialism and deontology share a prominent common feature in terms of moral reasoning. That is the idea of universalization. He says that there are three stages of universalization. In the fist stage, "we want to rule out as irrelevant mere numerical as opposed to generic difference, the difference between one individual and another simply as such" (*Ethics*, p. 83). This stage of universalization eliminates the differentiation among people. For example, a maxim such as "You ought not to kill another human being" is universalized into "It is wrong to kill another human being." The universalized maxim is applicable to every human being. So, Mackie says, "Words like 'I' and 'you' can be harmlessly used as variables in much the same way: 'What's right for you is right for me.' A judgement containing a proper name or indexical terms used not as a variable but as a constant . . . will not yet be universalized; but universalizable . . . " (*Ethics*, p. 84).

Mackie says that the first stage of universalization has an obvious advantage. (*Ethics*, p. 84) It eliminates a form of egoism from moral reasoning. A maxim such as, "You ought not to steal my property, but I can steal yours any time I want" cannot be universalized. However, the first stage of universalization has a few problems. One problem is that this universalization still allows various forms of egoism. For

example, it rules out "Everyone in the world works for the interest of France," but still allows "Everyone should works for his own country" or "Everyone should seek his own happiness" (*Ethics*, p. 84). Mackie says that the first stage of universalization is just a formal process, so that it cannot sufficiently explain moral contents. He says,

> The suggestion is that any sincerely universalized or universalizable prescription, which its proponent is ready to apply equally to himself and to others, and to go on applying in interpersonal situations when the roles are reversed, is a moral judgement. On this view there are only formal, but no material constraints on what can count as moral. The form, universal prescriptivity, is determined by the logic of moral terms – or of course it may be a group of persons – who makes the moral judgements or subscriptions to and adopts the moral system.
>
> I do not believe that such a purely formal account would provide a correct analysis of what we ordinarily mean by 'morality' or 'moral judgement'. (*Ethics*, p. 85-86)

The first stage of universalization is just a formal procedure which "still leaves plenty of room for unfairness of other kinds" (*Ethics*, p. 88-89).

Mackie specifically mentions two kinds of unfairness not eliminated by the first stage of universalization. First, unfairness from generic or qualitative differences—such as race, skin color, gender, etc.—are not filtered out by the first stage of universalization (*Ethics*, p. 89). Universalized rule of this sort such as, "All women should not go to college" or "All Blacks ought not to play baseball in the Major League" must be unfair although they pass the test on the first stage of universalization. The other unfairness not cleared up by the first stage of universalization is our own preferences, ideals, or values. Mackie says, "The second kind of unfairness is highlighted by Bernard Shaw's comment on the Golden Rule: 'Do not do unto others as you would have that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same'" (*Ethics*, p. 89). An example by Mackie is the case of a teetotaler. He can have a maxim: "You ought not to drink alcoholic beverages." This maxim can be universalized, but it contains the teetotaler's preference. Similarly, an

alcoholic can universalize his maxim such as "You ought to drink a six-pack every day" which also reflects the alcoholic's own preference.

The second stage of universalization eliminates the "principles which differentially favour those who happen to have certain characteristics or certain positions" (*Ethics*, p. 152). Maxims containing racial or sexual preferences cannot pass the second stage of universalization. Also, maxims including the differences of social status or physical qualities will drop out. "All women should not go to college" or "All Blacks ought not to play baseball in the Major League" cannot satisfy the requirement of the second stage of universalization. This way the second stage of universalization gets rid of the first kind of unfairness.

Mackie says that we still need the third stage of universalization to remove the second kind of unfairness. In the third stage of universalization, we take into account our own and opposite desires, tastes, preferences, ideals, and values, and "discover action-guiding principles . . . one can accept from both points of view" (*Ethics*, p. 93). If this universalization is possible, many conflicts can be resolved. The moral view included in the third stage of universalization has been adopted by many ethical theories. This stage of universalization is equivalent to what utilitarianism in the broad sense, as Mackie implies. Also, Mackie says that John Rawl's justice of fairness is the same as what the second and third stage of universalization try to achieve. (*Ethics*, p. 95) However, universalization of this stage is not only impracticable, but also unnecessary in terms of morality in the narrow sense. Mackie says, "[This universalization] is not necessary in order to counter the evils which it is the function of morality in the narrow sense to check, nor is it practicable" (*Ethics*, p.154).

Mackie continues to argue against the standpoint of traditional consequentialism and deontology. He says, "The issue between deontology and

consequentialism is often raised by asking 'Should we always act so as to bring about the best possible results on the whole, or are there some things that must be done, and/or others that must not be done, whatever the consequences?'" (*Ethics*, p. 154) Obviously this question is important in the theories of morality in the broad sense. However, Mackie says that this question is misleading because "There are no objective moral prescriptions of either sort" (*Ethics*, p. 154). Instead, the right question is: "Are all the guides to conduct that we want people to adopt, and all the constraints on conduct that we want to accept, of the form 'Act so as to bring about x as far as possible', or are some of them of the form 'Do' (or 'Do not do . . .') 'things of kind y'?" (*Ethics*, pp. 154-155) Of course, answer is "No" to him, and that means we need practical secondary principles instead of a theory of morality in the broad sense. Mackie says,

> Once we put the question in this form, it seems easily answered. Even those who would be called consequentialist – for example, utilitarian like Mill – accept deontology at this level. 'Secondary principles' framed in terms of kinds of action that are, or are not, to be performed will often be our immediate guides. (*Ethics*, p. 155)

Thus, Mackie's point is: the theories of morality in the broad sense are unnecessary and impractical. Taking into account various facts such as main motivation of human acts, limited resources, limited sympathies, patterns of human interaction, etc, morality in the narrow sense should be the center of moral consideration. The rest of his first-order ethics deals with various ethical subjects—such as human good or right—in terms of how morality in the narrow sense can explain them. He rejects absolute sense of good or right. For example, he says, "I would defend two negative theses, that specific rights cannot be determined a priori, on general grounds, and that whatever rights are recognized should not be absolute" (*Ethics*, p. 174). This statement is not surprising considering his emphasis of morality in the narrow sense.

If we expect from Mackie an account of how to build moral or community standards, his discussion of the first-order ethics is disappointing. He proposes almost nothing for the construction of standards. Instead, he focuses on the notion of morality in the narrow sense because he thinks the notion of morality in the narrow sense is important for several reasons. The essence of this morality is to constrain excessive selfish desires, that is, too excessive for the harmonious pursuit of individual interests. This type of morality is sought not for its own sake, but for the sake of interests and their coordination and satisfaction. This limited morality is a sort of minimal morality. Mackie touts its minimality as its virtue. He says it has another virtue. It can best cope with the fast-changing conditions of our world. Human relations have been changed very fast—the changes like the "growth of worldwide mutual dependence" or "technological advances" (*Ethics*, p. 121). So our moral sense and scope have to keep up with these changes. But the traditional moral views which rely on the notion of ideal rational men fail to deal with modern moral problems, according to him.

> It is tempting to speak of all these as increased powers that mankind (or Man') now has and may use in one way or another or refrain from using. But this is utterly misleading. Mankind is not an agent; it has no unity of decisions; it is therefore not confronted with any choices. Our game theory examples have made even plainer what should have been plain enough without them, that a plurality of interacting rational agents does not in general constitute a rational agent, and that the resultant of a number of choices is not in general a choice. These powers are scattered about: they are possessed, and may be exercised, by some men or groups of men or organizations, not by Man. (*Ethics*, p. 122)

Mackie emphasizes that moral values are invented. More correctly, he is saying that ethics "may well needs to be in part remade" (*Ethics*, p. 123). Our ethics should be remade in accordance with the changing human environments. In his view, the objectivists stick to the ethical views that were created long time ago and have become obsolete. They are likely to objectify old ethical laws and believe in them as if the laws would have the authority independent of our desires and conditions. Thus,

they would be trapped by out-of-date ethical rules. This is his practical objection to the objectivists, which is supposed reinforce his theoretical attack delivered in Part One of his *Ethics.* Mackie takes patriotism as example of the out-of-date ethical idea. He says,

> At the beginning of this chapter I said that morality is not to be discovered but to be made; we cannot brush this aside by adding 'but it has been made already, long ago'. It may well need to be in part remade. Of course, only in part. Nothing has altered or will alter the importance of being able to make and keep and rely on others keeping agreements. Hobbes's third law of nature, that men perform their covenants made, is an eternal and immutable fragment of morality. But some more specific obligations traditionally attached to status, not created by contract, are dispensable; patriotism, for example, may have out-lived its usefulness. (*Ethics*, p. 123)

Even if patriotism has become obsolete, the objectivists would still revere it if they believe it is an objective value. But it can be rejected readily by morality in the narrow sense because its only function is to promote smooth relations among people and protection of mutual benefits.

Problem in Mackie's First-order Ethics

I do not know any objectivist who believes patriotism is an eternal objective value. An objectivist can equally reject patriotism if it has become no longer useful in our global age. Just as Mackie would reject patriotism for the sake of global social cooperation, so would the objectivist. In that case, the promotion of social cooperation is the common value that is shared by Mackie and the objectivist. That may very well prove that social cooperation is an eternally objective value governing all human relations. Such an objective value cannot be monopolized by Mackie and his morality in the narrow sense. It should be accessible to any moral theorist. He claims that morality in the narrow sense alone has the virtue of adapting the fast-changing circumstances. He gives the impression that the objectivists can never adapt to those changes because they are trapped in the eternal values.

Although social cooperation is important for all of us, it can take many forms. Even when it is based on an agreement, it can be fair or unfair, exploitive or generous. The arrangement depends on each party's bargaining power. Mackie recognizes the problem of bargaining:

> Though complete intransigence in either party is disastrous for both, incomplete relative intransigence is differentially advantageous to its possessor. This holds, as I have said, even if the initial situation is symmetrical; but if one party has less to lose by failure to agree, or less to gain from a stable agreement, further possibilities of unequal agreements arise. Rational bargaining can result in exploitation. (*Ethics*, p. 119)

Occasionally, it is better to reach an agreement than no agreement. So one party comes to accept an unfair contract. There is no way to rectify such an unfair contract by Mackie's morality in the narrow sense. As far as I can see, the question of fairness is not a basic value protected by morality in the narrow sense. Its only purpose is to secure social cooperation. The question of whether the terms of cooperation are fair or unfair is irrelevant. This question cannot be even raised, let alone settled, without appealing to the principle of justice. Since this principle is applicable to any social arrangement, it is a universal and eternal principle. As Mackie says, our society changes and our world changes, and we have to revise our moral standards for the changing world. But we cannot ignore the principle of justice whatever changes we have to make in our social arrangements. We just do not just want to make changes without a guiding principle. We want to make the best of all possible changes. For that we have to appeal to the concept of Good. We do not just to make any social arrangement for cooperation. We want to make it on fair terms. For that we have to appeal to the ideal of fairness. These objective values are indispensable for any change of moral standards. Without being guided by these objective values, the new standards may even turn out to be worse than the old obsolete standards. Therefore, we have to rely on the objective values for the sake of social changes. The

objectivists can never be trapped in their objective values because they are never localized. Those values are everywhere, that is, at least wherever human beings have to live in a community. Mackie believes that the social change exposes the weakness of moral objectivism. But the opposite is the truth. The social change demonstrates its strength.

When we revise the old standards, we have to take a critical stand and evaluate their strength and weakness. How do we make this evaluation? Let us consider why patriotism has become problematic. Blind patriotism has caused international tensions and wars over natural resources and territories. Because the world is more closely interconnected than before, patriotism may be an obstacle for the smooth relations in the global community. But we cannot say that patriotism has become harmful or obsolete *in toto*. It is unthinkable that people should not love and care about their families, relatives, and neighbors more than the strangers in remote areas. Such indifference would be morally unhealthy. It seems improbable that we can get rid of patriotism altogether as our natural feeling. Patriotism need not dictate that we should treat foreigners unfairly. To condemn patriotism is one, and to condemn its abuse is another thing. This discrimination cannot be made without appealing to the general principle of fairness. That is, the objective values are indispensable for the critical examination of old standards even before we can think of revising them, because their revision cannot begin without their critical scrutiny. Thus we have to rely on objective values before, during, and after the revision of old standards. We cannot take a single step without relying on them. This is the practical argument for the existence of objective values, which counters Mackie's practical argument for their disproof. By "the practical argument" I mean that the argument based on our moral practice rather than on our moral theory.

Revising the old standards is not basically different from constructing new standards from the scratch. The problems we have encountered in the revision of old standards reappear in the construction of new standards. As Mackie says, we have to "invent" our new standards if we do not have any already. What sort of standards should be adopted depends on the question what sort of society we want to build. This question involves two factors: (1) the natural conditions and (2) the normative ideals. The natural conditions belong to the empirical question, but the normative ideals do not. Even on the basis of the same natural conditions, we can think of constructing different societies. Whatever social orders we may adopt, we can never escape the question whether our social order is going to be fair or unfair. Thus we come back to the objective value of fairness. Those objective values are unavoidable and unchangeable. This is so not only in the construction or adoption of a new social order, but also in the acceptance of an established social order. Mackie often gives the impression that all first order standards are self-justifying. But the first order standards are always subject to our critical approach. There are only three ways to take a critical stance. The easiest way is to appeal to one's own subjective preferences. I can say that democracy is wrong because I do hate it. Obviously, this subjectivist stance carries no moral weight. The second way is to appeal to reflective equilibrium. John Rawls has done it in his theory of justice. It is endorsed by Mackie, too (*Ethics,* 105). But reflective equilibrium can have no real authority. Nobody would endorse the Nazi legal system even if it were in perfect reflective equilibrium. Reflective equilibrium can never carry a greater authority than the authority of the existing standards, because it is the equilibrium of those standards. The third way is to appeal to transcendent principles, if there are any such principles. They alone can provide authority to our critical stance. There is no way to prove the existence of those principles. But we can assume their existence for our moral practice. This

assumption is like Kant's postulates for practical reason. Kant argues for his postulates on the ground that our moral practice makes no sense without presupposing them. This is his practical argument for the three postulates of God, freedom, and immortality. We can make the same kind of practical argument for objective values such as fairness or justice. Without assuming their existence, our critical stance has nothing to stand on. Without appealing to transcendent principles, a critical stance must be reduced to either the expression of our subjective preferences or the equilibrium of existing standards. Either way, our critical stance can have no real critical bite. Our critical stance towards existing standards is an indispensable element of our moral practice. For the integrity of our moral practice, we have to appeal to the objective values. This is my practical argument for objective values. I have come up with this argument in my struggle with Mackie and his skepticism.

Chapter 2

Blackburn's Antirealism

Simon Blackburn's antirealism is very similar to Mackie's skepticism. Both of them deny the existence of objective values. But Blackburn is a harsh critic of Mackie's theory. Let us look into his criticism to determine the exact difference between his antirealism and Mackie's skepticism. Blackburn wants to know why Mackie's error theory has no influence whatsoever on his first-order ethics. Blackburn says,

> Mackie did not draw quite the consequences one might have expected from this position. If a vocabulary embodies an error, then it would be better if it were replaced by one which avoids the error. Slightly more accurately, if a vocabulary embodies an error *in some use* it would be better if either it, or a replacement vocabulary, were used differently. We could better describe this by saying that our old, infected moral concepts or ways of thought should be replaced by ones which serve our legitimate needs, but avoids the mistake. Yet Mackie does not say what such a way of thought would look like, and how it would be different in order to show its innocence of the old error. On the contrary, in the second part of the book, he is quite happy to go on to express a large number of straightforward moral views, about the good life, about whether it is permissible to commit suicide or abortion, and so on. All these are expressed in the old, supposedly infected vocabulary. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," pp. 149-150)

Mackie's error theory means that our moral words are contaminated by the erroneous belief in objective moral values. However, he still uses the same moral words to construct his first-order ethics. In spite of his error theory, he assumes that his usage of moral terms and concepts in the second part of the *Ethics* is error-free.

Moralizing vs. Shmoralizing

Blackburn labels Mackie's moral deliberation on the first-order ethics as "shmoralizing" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 150). He uses the label of "moralizing" to refer to the moral deliberation of those who do not accept Mackie's

error theory of the second-order objective values. Blackburn's contention is that he can detect no difference between moralizing and shmoralizing. If shmoralizing is the same as moralizing, Mackie's shmoralizing and moralizing may stand on the same error theory. Or both of them may be error-free.

Mackie may think that his shmoralizing is error-free while moralizing is based on error. But Blackburn says that the practice of shmoralizing is hardly distinguishable from that of moralizing. He concedes that there can be two or more interpretations about the same activity. So there are two ways of understanding what Mackie is doing. One is to say that Mackie's smoralizing and moralizing are two different kinds of activity. The other is to say that Mackie is offering a different theory of the same activity. Blackburn says, "It seems gratuitous to infer that there are two different activities from the fact that there are two or more different theories about the nature of activity" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value, p. 150). Therefore he would rather assume that Mackie is offering a different theory of the same activity. Blackburn says,

> It would be much more natural to say that Hume and Mackie moralize, just as ordinary people do, but with a developed and different theory about what it is that they are doing. The error theory then shrinks to the claim that most ordinary moralists have a bad theory, or at least no very good theory, about what it is to moralize, and in particular that they falsely imagine a kind of objectivity for values, obligations, and so on. This may be true, but it does not follow that the error infects the practice of moralizing, nor the concepts used in ways defined by that practice. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 150)

I think that Blackburn's criticism is unfair to Mackie. I will try to construct Mackie's defense against his criticism. In the first part of the *Ethics,* Mackie tries to expose the error in the common belief that objective values of the second order are the basis for the first order ethics. After removing the objective values, he proposes a new concept of objectivity—i.e., the objectivity based on the community standards. Thus, although he uses the same words in the second part, the moral words in the

second part have different ground from the words in the first part. The difference and the sameness can be illustrated by following two statements:

(a) Doing X is wrong (in terms of objective moral values), so we should not do it.

(b) Doing X is wrong (in terms of a conventional standard), so we should not do it.

When we utter these statements, the words in the parentheses are not even mentioned. These unmentioned words make the difference between moralizing and shmoralizing. Blackburn can see no difference between moralizing and shmoralizing because fails to see those unmentioned parenthetical words. There may be no practical difference between (a) and (b); both of them say that we should not do X because it is wrong. But there is a theoretical difference. One of the statements commits the error Mackie talked about, and the other is error-free.

Blackburn considers a different kind of defense for Mackie's position, which is much more complicated than my own. He says,

> Here, however, a fairly blanket holism can be introduced to rescue Mackie, or at least to urge that it is profitless to oppose him. Our theories infect our meanings; so a different theory about the nature of the activity of moralizing will yield a different meaning for the terms with which we do it; hence Mackie is right that the ordinary meanings do embody error. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," pp. 150-151)

Holism approximately holds that the meaning of each part depends on the whole system. So, according to this view, a criticism focusing on a part—i.e., error theory—is not a good strategy. As long as his skepticism constitutes a well-organized whole, according to holism, it is meaningless to single out Mackie's error theory which is a part of the whole. The holism holds that the error theory must have a significant role and meaning within his skepticism. But the same theory does not carry out any substantial role in a different framework. So, it may be unhealthy to single out the

error theory and criticize it. But Blackburn denies the appropriateness of holistic approach in this case. He says,

> It becomes profitless to split things in two, so that on the one hand there is the error-free practice, and on the other hand a multiplicity of possibly erroneous theories about its nature. Indeed, the split appeals no more than the despised analytic-synthetic distinction, and if the opponents of an error theory need that, they will gain few supporters. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 151)

Blackburn sees no good reason to accept the distinction between the error-free moral practice and the erroneous moral practice. He says that this distinction is as trivial as the analytic-synthetic distinction. He claims that the focus should be moral practice, not the meaning of moral words.

> Then the holist may have the thesis about 'full meaning', with the consequence that Hume and Mackie may give a different full meaning to their terms, simply through having a different theory of their point and purpose. But it will not follow that their *practice* will differ from that of other people. Hence, it will not follow that other people's practice embodies error. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 151)

In terms of holism, each theory can have a set of distinctive meanings of words. But the center of our attention is how people behave, that is, practice. Although the meaning of terms may be different from a theory to another, practices may be the same. That is, although Mackie explains moral practices in light of the error theory, his notion of moral practice may not be really different from other theorists'. Blackburn says that we cannot tell whether a person's moral practice commits the so-called error when we observe his moral action. He says, "I maintain, in the moral case one ought not to be able to tell from the way in which someone conducts the activity of moralizing, whether he has committed the 'objectivist' mistake or not;

hence any such mistake is better thought of as accidental to the practice" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 151).

Blackburn's argument here can be seen clearly if we take into account a notion of objectivity Mackie suggests. As we saw, Mackie talks about two different notions of objectivity. One is the notion of objectivity derived from the false belief in objective moral values. The other notion of objectivity comes from community or conventional standards. The second notion of objectivity is error-free. When we talk about moral values and make moral judgments in an objective manner, it is very difficult to tell whether our objectivity is the first or the second type. To show the difficulty, let me use the same example I used earlier.

(a) Doing X is wrong (in terms of objective moral values), so we should not do it.

(b) Doing X is wrong (in terms of a conventional standard), so we should not do it.

Blackburn's argument amounts to saying that we cannot distinguish two practices because of the unspoken words. And he may say that it is rare or accidental to make the judgments relying on the notion of objective moral values as in (a). However, Blackburn's argument is not necessarily convincing. If we fully take into account Mackie's role as a moral reformist, the distinction between erroneous practice and error-free practice makes sense. That also means that the distinction between (a) and (b) is distinct and substantial. In terms of Mackie's theory, people can change their behavior from erroneous practices to error-free ones. For example, a religious person believes that killing is wrong because it violates God's command. Later on, he abandons his religion, but still believes that killing is wrong for some other reasons. According to Blackburn's view, the change in this person's belief is unnoticeable in

his moral behavior or makes no difference for his moral practice, because his moral practice has not changed at all. I think Blackburn oversimplifies patterns of moral practice.

Blackburn has one more criticism of Mackie and his error theory. This criticism revolves around the notion of objectivity. Blackburn recognizes three versions of the Humean tradition. The first one is what he calls "a revisionist projectivism" to which he says Mackie belong ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 152). The second one is Blackburn's quasi-realism, and the last is the "quietist view" of R. M. Hare. Blackburn argues that our way of using moral words—what he calls the "grammar" of moral discourse—does not support Mackie's subjectivism. Blackburn says, "Mackie cannot properly use these aspects of our practice [i.e., what he calls the grammar of ethics] in support of the error theory" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 152). To make his case, Blackburn examines Mackie's argument about Russell's famous statement on bull-fighting. According to Mackie, Russell says,

> Certainly there seems to be something more. Suppose, for example, that some one were to advocate the introduction of bull-fighting in this country. In opposing the proposal, I should feel, not only that I was expressing my desires, but that my desires in the matter are right, whatever they may mean. As a matter of argument, I can, I think, show that I am not guilty of any logical inconsistency in holding to the above interpretation of ethics and at the same time expressing strong ethical preferences. But in feeling I am not satisfied. (*Ethics*, p. 34)

Mackie assesses Russell's view as follows:

> But he [Russell] concludes, reasonably enough, with the remark: 'I can only say that, while my own opinions as to ethics do not satisfy me, other people's satisfy me still less.'

> I conclude, then, that ordinary moral judgements include a claim to objectivity, an assumption that there are objective values in just the sense in which I am concerned to deny this. (*Ethics*, p. 35)

Mackie construes Russell's remark as his belief that his aversion to bull-fighting is not merely a subjective preference, but an objective truth. This belief exemplifies Mackie's error theory. This is a faulty account of Russell's psychology, according to Blackburn. It has nothing to do with error. It should be understood not as a problem of belief, but as an expression of attitude. Blackburn says,

> For instance, he cites Russell's feeling that on a particular moral issue (opposition to the introduction of bull-fighting into England) one does not just express a desire that the thing should not happen, but does so while feeling that one's desires on such a matter are right. Mackie thinks that this is a claim to objectivity, as such erroneous. The quasi-realist will see it instead as a proper necessary expression of an attitude to our own attitudes. It is not something that should be wrenched out of our moral psychology; it is something we need to cultivate to the right degree and in the right places, to avoid the (moral) defect of indifference to things that merit passion. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," pp. 152-153)

In talking about his aversion to bull-fighting, Russell said, "In opposing the proposal, I should feel, not only that I was expressing my desires, but that my desires in the matter are right, whatever they may mean." Russell is talking about his feeling. But Mackie has taken Russell's feeling as the expression of his belief. This is Mackie's mistake in his error theory. Blackburn takes Russell's feeling as "a proper necessary expression of an attitude." This is the basic difference between Blackburn and Mackie. What Mackie regards as the erroneous belief in objective values is nothing more than the familiar attitude for Blackburn. In Mackie's view, our ordinary moral practice is embedded in massive errors; in Blackburn's view, it is grounded in pervasive attitudes.

Blackburn cannot relegate the expressions of moral beliefs to the second order because they have to operate on the first order for making ordinary moral judgments. In fact, Russell's view regarding bull-fighting belongs to the first order because it is a

judgment of ordinary moral practice. But Mackie extends Russell's view to the second order because it aspires to objectivity. I think Mackie believes that this is a case of the error. So, he tries to say that Russell bases his judgment on the second-order moral values. This brings up a serious problem in Mackie's demarcation of the two orders. That is, the separation and independence of the two orders fall apart, and skepticism dominates both orders.

The difficulty is avoided by Blackburn. For him, projection takes place only within the first order. That is, we do not project our feelings to create the despised objective values, but to make practical moral values. No doubt, Blackburn agrees with Mackie that there are no objective moral values. In that regard, there is no difference between them. Since there is no objective moral value, all moral values are created or projected by us. Here is Blackburn's own account of projection,

> This actually illustrates a central quasi-realist tactic: what seems like a thought which embodies a particular second-order metaphysic of morals is seen instead as a kind of thought which expresses a first-order attitude or need. Perhaps the nicest example comes from counter-factuals which seem to assert an anti-projectivist, mind-independence of moral facts: 'even if we had approved it or enjoyed it or desired to do it, bear-baiting would still have been wrong' can sound like a second order, realist commitment directly in opposition to projectivism. But in fact, on the construal of indirect context which I offer, it comes out as a perfectly sensible first-order commitment to the effect that it is not our enjoyments or approvals which you should look to in discovering whether bear-baiting is wrong (it is at least mainly the effect on the bear). ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 153)

Blackburn's point is that there is no need to use the two-order talk to express the simple point that you have a strong feeling against bear-baiting. Your strong feeling is your attitude that also belongs to the first order. This account is the same as the one he gave for Russell's strong feeling against bull-fighting. He holds that all our moral feelings are the projection of our attitude. Conversely, our attitudes are defined by

our feelings. This is his theory of attitudinal projection or emotive projection. This is the heart of his quasi-realism.

Blackburn's quasi-realism allows quasi-reality to the moral values and properties created by projectivism. Their reality may be called projective reality. It is like the projective reality of colors. It may even be called their objectivity. He can see nothing erroneous in this. On the contrary, he says that projection is "something we need to cultivate to the right degree and in the right places, to avoid the (moral) defect of indifference to things that merit passion" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 153). There is no nothing erroneous in the projection of moral values or feelings. By vouchsafing for the soundness of moral projection, he wants to preserve the integrity of morality. He says, "I have been using quasi-realism to protect the appearance of morality: to urge that there is no error in our ordinary ways of thought and our ordinary commitments and passions" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 158). All these moral phenomena—passions, commitments, and projections—take place in the first order. There is no need to install the second order. In Mackie's view, however, all projections on the second order are erroneous. Blackburn removes Mackian errors by discarding the second order. This is the ultimate difference between the two moral philosophers.

Quasi-Realism and Moderate Realism

Blackburn thinks there is no problem in talking about moral truth and moral objectivity, although the truth and objectivity are not real. The status of moral truths is merely quasi-real because the truths are just created by the projection of attitudes.

However, Blackburn is not alone in accepting projection without prejudice. Some moral realists think that moral truths are real rather than quasi-real although moral properties are projected. Blackburn thinks that this kind of realism is incompatible with his projectivism and quasi-realism. He says,

> This enterprise will interest a projectivist most, because it defends him against the most forceful attack he faces, which is that he cannot accommodate the rich phenomena of the moral life. But realist opponents of projectivism need to notice quasi-realism as well, since otherwise they do not know how to launch an attack on projectivism. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 158)

According to Blackburn, this version of realism holds that moral properties are secondary qualities. Let us call this position moderate moral realism. He introduces the moderate realists' view and criticism as follows:

> (1) Consider secondary properties. Colours (etc.) are real properties of objects, and this is true even if the best causal explanation of how we detect them proceeds by mentioning primary properties. Colours really exist, although the reality which contains them is not independent of the fact that there also exist human modes of perception.
>
> (2) The thesis just put forward will only appear surprising (i) because of a prejudice that only primary properties, or the properties of some 'ultimate' scientific theory of things, are real, or (ii) because we forget the truth that the world cannot be 'prised away from' our manner of conceiving it, nor from our interests and concerns when we do so. Since neither of these motives is legitimate, there is no obstacle to (1), and to using the parallel with colours to allow a reality to values etc.
>
> (3) It is true that a training of a particular kind is needed to enable people properly to perceive values etc., but this is harmless: people need training to detect, e.g., features of tunes or shades. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 159)

The color analogy is important for understanding moderate moral realism: Moral properties are analogous to color properties. Although color properties are secondary properties, they are real. (2) explains why secondary properties should be regarded as real. First, it is a prejudice to claim that only primary properties or

scientific facts are real. Second, the world cannot be absolutely independent of our cognition, interest, or concern. Thus, insofar as we ascertain secondary properties as an inseparable feature of the world, they are as real as the world. One may argue that moral properties are different from secondary properties because moral practices and the ascertainment of moral properties require some training. But some moderate moral realists claim that some other secondary properties—e.g., properties in music or art—also require training for their discernment. Blackburn says that Thomas Nagel, David Wiggins, John McDowell, and Hillary Putnam can regarded as moderate realists. But he says, "I am conscious that it is not easy to extract one theory, from those writings" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 158). There are theoretical differences between them to a considerable degree. In particular, the view of McDowell, which is called the sensibility theory, does not approve the primary-secondary distinction. His theory will be examined in the next chapter.

Blackburn rejects moderate moral realism by citing six reasons. This is his six point comparison of moral properties with secondary qualities. The six points are designated as (a) through (f). The comparison is intended to show the difference between moral properties and secondary qualities. He begins with an argument that secondary properties explain scientific fact while moral properties do not.

> (a) Moral properties supervene upon others in quite a different way from any in which secondary properties do so. It is a scientific fact that secondary properties supervene upon primary properties. It may even be a metaphysical fact, at least inasmuch as it would offend deep metaphysical commitments to imagine secondary properties changing whilst primary properties do not. But it is not a criterion of incompetence in the ascription of secondary properties to fail to realize that they must supervene upon others. On the other hand, that moral properties supervene upon natural ones is not a scientific fact, and it *is* criterial of incompetence in moralizing to fail to realize that they must do so. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 159)

The fact that secondary properties supervene on primary properties can be explained scientifically. But the supervenience of moral properites on natural properties is not a scientific fact. Because the scientific supervenience is natural, we do not blame anyone who fails to perceive the supervening properties. But this is different with moral properties. Those who fail to perceive moral properties are to be rebuked.

In the next point, (b), Blackburn says, "The receptive mechanism whereby we are acquainted with secondary properties are well-known objects of scientific study" while "These studies are not at all similar to studies of defects of character which lead to moral blindness ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 160). There is another difference between them: we can lose the secondary-property-detecting mechanisms immediately by accident or injury. But there is no corresponding injury to our capacity to perceive moral properties. This is just another way of saying that the detection of secondary properties requires a physical organ, but that of moral properties does not.

For the third point (c), Blackburn says that although both secondary and moral properties are mind-dependent, there is a considerable difference. If moral qualities are changed, it is called deterioration. But the change of secondary properties is not as deterioration. He says, "[I]f we were to change so that everything in the world which had appeared blue came to appear red to us, this is what it is for the world to cease to contain blue things, and come to contain only red things. The analogue with moral qualities fails dramatically: if everyone comes to think of it as permissible to maltreat animals, this does nothing at all to make it permissible: it just means that everybody has deteriorated" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 160). The

idea of deterioration introduces an important question, because it implies good and bad, better and worse. What is the standard for saying that someone's moral sensibility has deteriorated or improved? Is the standard objective or subjective? Unfortunately, Blackburn never note of this question in his talk of deterioration.

In the fourth point (d), he brings up the familiar problem of relativity. The perception of moral properties varies from one society to another while that of secondary properties does not. Moral properties are dependent upon the culture of a society, but this dependence is not expected in secondary properties. He says, "The way in which moral practices vary with the forms of life of a society is not at all similar to the way, if any, in which perceptions of secondary qualities can vary with those forms of life" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 160). The fifth point (e) appears to be an extension of (d). But I confess that it is opaque to me. So I will move on to the last point (f). Blackburn says,

> (f) Evaluative predicates are typically attributive: a thing may be good *qua* action of a commander-in-chief, but bad *qua* action of a father, just as a man may be a good burglar but a bad batsman. Secondary properties just sit there: a red tomato is a red fruit and a red object just bought at the grocer's. (Wiggins notices this asymmetry after the passage quoted.) ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," pp. 160-161)

The right usage of evaluative predicates depends on various human roles. It is a good thing for a commander-in-chief to say, "Kill your enemies." But this command is not good if a father says it to his son. But this diversity is not found in the secondary-property predicates. There are no differences in their description of the subjects. Red tomatoes are red, and green peppers are green.

Blackburn does not think that his points presented from (a) through (f) can make the moderate realist silent. Even if it may be true that moral properties are different from secondary qualities, the moderate moral realists may insist, a

secondary-quality model can still explain the nature and function of morality. They may even says that it is a better account of morality than his quasi-realism. So Blackburn thinks he needs to give a decisive reason for why the moderate realism is wrong. His decisive move is to show that the realist's adherence to the perceptual model provides no theory of ethics at all. Of course, whenever we talk about moral truth, a model of moral perception comes implicitly with it. But Blackburn says,

> We talk of perception whenever we think of ourselves as properly indicating the truth: in other words, whenever we feel able to say that 'if it hadn't been the case that *p* I would not be committed to *p*'. But this is not the end of epistemology, but its beginning, for the theorist's job is to reflect upon our right to hold such conditionals. Merely reporting that we hold them is not doing this. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 161)

The conditional means that we perceive a moral property, *p*. But still we have to justify the conditional or "to reflect upon our right to hold such conditionals." The distinction between the perception of a moral property and its justification is what actually happens when we ascertains the truth and falsity of moral judgments. For example, a person, *A,* sees a customer, *B,* in a convenience store pick an item and go out without paying for it. *A* may think *B*'s action is wrong. This judgment is possible because *A* catches a moral property in the *B*'s action. But later on *A* finds out that *B* had paid for the item in advance or that *B* was exchanging the item. If so, *A*'s earlier apprehension of the moral property is not justified. Hence, a perceptual model explains how we perceive moral properties, but this model does neither justify specific moral judgments, nor provides an account of how some actions are right or wrong. Blackburn emphasizes this point as follows:

> The important point is that speaking of moral perception by itself provides no theory whatsoever of such conditionals. It provides only a misleading sense of security that somewhere there is such a theory. The theory is not causal, as in the case of shape, nor can it be a matter of conformity with a community, for that just misplaces moral reality, which is not created by community consensus, as (c) reminds us. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 162)

The theoretical model for the truth claims of perceptual properties is the causal model. But the moderate moral realists cannot find a causal model for the truths of moral judgments. The relation between the moral perception and the moral judgment is not causal, whereas the relation between the perception of a secondary quality and the perceptual judgment is causal. This is the critical point where the color analogy fails for moral perception and judgment. This is Blackburn's decisive argument against the moderate moral realists. This also constitutes the difference between their realism and his quasi-realism. Moral properties looks like real, but not really real.

Blackburn then argues that his projectivism can provide a better account of moral phenomena. He says,

> So projectivism can accommodate the propositional grammar of ethics. I need not seek to revise that. On the contrary, properly protected by quasi-realism it supports and indeed explains this much of our ordinary moral thought. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 153).

He also says, "The first thing to realize is that there is nothing to prevent a projectivist from *speaking of* the perception of moral properties, of the world containing obligation, and so on" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 161). He emphasizes the advantage of his model as follows:

> The nub of the matter, then, is that the projectivist provides explanation, making moralizing an intelligible human activity with its own explanation and its own property, and the opposition provides one, but gestures at an evidently lame analogy. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 162)

It is questionable whether his projectivism can provide the best explanation of ordinary morality. I think Blackburn exaggerates the success and power of his theory. In fact, he qualifies his claim, "As a metaphysical view, projectivism explains what we are doing when we moralize. It does not follow that it can explain, or be asked to explain, all the features of the particular way we moralize" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 164). For instance, projectivism cannot explain whether or not deontology is better than consequentialism in specific incidents.

Neither can it tell what we have to do in the face of a difficult moral dilemma. But these are its practical limitations, which we can set aside. Let us consider its salient theoretical features.

Projectivism claims that there are external things outside of our subjective perceptions and attitudes. That is, it can accept the existence of external moral properties although they are created by our projection. Also, it endorses the objectivity of moral values. Blackburn is aware of the opposition to his position. He says,

> Could it be held that this explanatory interest is somehow unjustified: that explanation of a certain type cannot be had, or that the desire for them is the desire for an illusory, 'external' viewpoint outside of all human standpoints and perspectives? This is the justification for not having or wanting to have an explanatory theory along my lines at all. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 163)

This position is what Blackburn calls "quietism" which is presented by R. M. Hare. Hare asserts that moral words have the meaning of universalizability and prescriptivity. That is, when it is said, "Doing X is wrong" or "You ought to do Y," the moral words like "wrong" or "ought to" demands the speakers to universalize their judgments. This requirement of universalization is the criterion for the evaluation of each moral judgment. This follows Kant's doctrine of universalization, which requires on the test of logical coherence. Hence Blackburn says that Hare adopts the coherence theory of truth, not correspondence theory. In other words, moral truth does not depend on any property or fact external to our minds. As Blackburn says, Hare's theory holds "that no real issue can be built around the objectivity or otherwise of moral values" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 152). According to this view, we may not need an extra theory of ethics to talk about moral truth because the meaning of moral words provides the criterion of moral truth.

Blackburn rejects the quietist view for two reasons. First, he says that the quietist view cannot explain the plain fact that people actually look for moral truths by utilizing much richer resources than the view provides. The quietist view hardly explains the scope of our moral consideration. Blackburn says, "The first reason for rejecting it is that we know that it is a common human option to moralize about more or fewer things in greater or lesser strengths. The scope of morality can wax and wane, and this makes it urgent to find an explanation of the practice which goes some way to defining its *proper* scope" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 163). The other reason by Blackburn is that there is no justification for the quietist's notion of moral truth. He says, "Secondly, there can never be an a priori right to claim that our activity in making judgments X permits of no explanation (except the gesture which says that we perceive X-type states of affairs). You just have to try the various explanations out" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 163).

If it is true that projectivism just explains "what we are doing when we moralize," how much can it say about the first-order normative ethics? Blackburn answers that although his metaphysical view does not entail any first-order theory, projectivism can be associated with consequentialism rather than deontology. He says, "It should be said at the outset that there is no essential connection between projectivism and a cosequential view in ethics" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 164). However, if we look into why people behave morally or what moral senses they have, he says, we can draw a conclusion analogous to Mackie's. Morality is basically created to make human relations harmonious and to protect mutual interests. We have moral senses to fulfill social functions. Hence morality has a goal or purpose. This is the fundamental agreement between Mackie and Blackburn. But there is an important difference. As we noted in the last chapter, Mackie recognizes the need of making social contracts for social cooperation. But Blackburn never talks

about the contract model for the construction of community standards. He banks everything on the projection model. He seems to assume that all social orders are created by the projection of moral feelings. He says,

> Nevertheless it is natural to associate projectivism with consequentialist moralities, in the following way. A projectivist is unlikely to take the moral sentiments as simply given. He will fill out the story by attempting an explanation of the practice of moralizing. This turns to its function, and particularly to its social function. In Mackie's terms, morality is an invention which is successful because it enables things go well amongst people with a natural inheritance of needs and desires which they must together fulfill. Moral thought becomes a practice with a purpose. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 164)

When Mackie says that morality is an invention, he is talking about the human ingenuity in constructing community standards and revising them when they become obsolete or dysfunctional. But Blackburn does not seem to recognize this inventive side of Mackie's theory. He seems to assume that the conjunction of his projectivism with consequentialism is made by moral feelings or attitudes in some natural mode. Their conjunction will be successful and retained if it produces beneficial results for social cooperation.

When Blackburn says that he is endorsing the conjunction of projectivism with consequentialim, he does not mean the ordinary utilitarianism, but a motive-consequentialism. But his explanation of this point is confusing:

> What we really have is a 'motive-consequentialism'—a grown-up brother of rule-utilitarianism. The motivations people obey are good in proportion as the consequences of people being like that (and knowing that other people are like that) are good. Actions are then judged either in the light of the motivations that prompted them, or in the different dimension of their actual effects in the world, depending on the purposes for which we are judging them. But the position does not collapse into ordinary act-consequentialism, because for well-known reasons one would expect a society of people motivated solely by consequentialist considerations to do pretty badly. Nor need any such position share the other prominent feature of utilitarianism which causes dislike: the idea that all values are ultimately commensurable. ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 165)

Blackburn wants to adopt motive-consequentialism because he believes that it retains the good features of utilitarianism minus its well-known unacceptable features. But he does not faithfully stick to motive-consequentialism when he says, "Actions are then judged either in the light of the motivations that prompted them, or in the different dimension of their actual effects in the world, depending on the purposes for which we are judging them." The first half of this sentence is for motive-consequentialism. But its second half goes well beyond motive-consequentialism. The phrase, "the different dimension of their actual effects in the world," is concerned not with the motive of actions, but with their results. In fact, he is combining the motive-oriented utilitarianism with the result-oriented utilitarianism. It would have been simpler if he had said that he wanted to adopt all the good features of utilitarianism and reject all its bad features. This is indeed a great proposal which is hard to fault with. But it presents a serious problem as a normative theory.

For the utilitarians, the principle of utility is not only the highest moral principle, but the only moral principle. There can be no other moral principle than the principle of utility. This unique position of their principle is the source of all their theoretical problems because the principle of utility endorses a number of outcomes that blatantly goes against our common sense morality, especially our sense of justice. One way of coping with this problem is to say: "Utilitarianism can be saved by just getting rid of all its bad features." This proposal is sometimes known as "laundering utilitarianism." But the proposed laundering requires a moral standard for determining what are the good features of utilitarianism and what are its bad features. But this standard cannot be the principle of utility. It has to be non-utilitarian

standard. But to save utilitarianism by appealing to a non-utilitarian standard goes against the basic utilitarian premise that the principle of utility is the only and the highest moral principle. The use of a non-utilitarian standard dethrones the principle of utility. It is no longer the sovereign principle; it has to be subject to a higher principle. Hence the resulting utilitarianism is utilitarian only in name. In substance, it has become something else. What the laundered utilitarianism should be called depends on what sort of non-utilitarian standard is used for the laundering job. For example, if the Kantian standard is used, the new utilitarianism will be a special version of Kantian ethics. In most cases of laundering utilitarianism, commonsense morality is used as the standard. In that case, utilitarianism is reduced to commonsense morality. The same problem arises for Blackburn's proposal to retain all the good features of utilitarianism and rejects all its bad features. What moral standard is he going to use to distinguish the good features of utilitarianism from its bad features? Blackburn does not even consider this question. Obviously, he has to use a non-utilitarian standard for the laundering job. Whatever non-utilitarian standard may be used, his laundered utilitarianism or consequentialism cannot be simply utilitarian or consequentialist. It is impossible to place a definite label on it until he reveals the nature of the standard he wants to use for the laundering job.

Blackburn acknowledges that the motive-consequentialism may not explain every feature and aspect of human morality. But he says, "I regard the alliance with consequentialism as a strength rather than anything else—to put it another way, it is only an alliance with the best features of that direction in ethical thought" ("Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," p. 165). As we noted in the last chapter, Mackie's

first order ethics—i.e., morality in the narrow sense—can embrace consequentialism. On the consequential ground, Blackburn seems to make his peace with Mackie. The latter also does not want to take utilitarianism in its original or pure version. He says that utilitarianism is all right insofar as it takes up morality in the narrow sense. If it is taken as a morality in the broad sense, he says, utilitarianism becomes just another philosophical fantasy. So he wants to give a new meaning to the utilitarian principle by restricting its scope and function to curb excessive selfish desires for the sake of smooth social cooperation (*Ethics,* pp. 125-148). The proposed restriction of utilitarianism raises the same problem of non-utilitarian standard that has arisen in Blackburn's project for laundering utilitarianism. How can the non-utilitarian normative standard—morality in the narrow sense—be justified? The standard for restricting utilitarianism cannot be utilitarian because the excessive scope and function is generated by the unrestricted deployment of the principle of utility. Mackie must assume that the notion of morality can be grounded in our common sense or common experience. In that case, his morality is reduced to commonsense morality. After all the fire works, he seems to settle down on the unpretentious commonsense morality. This is the most disappointing feature of his philosophical inquiry.

Quasi-realism vs. Realism

Blackburn's quasi-realism holds that our commitment to moral truth and objectivity is fully warranted. He accepts moral realism in this respect. However, he thinks moral realism is false because it cannot explain some aspects of moral thought. He defines

moral realism: “the truth of moral utterances is to consist in their correspondence withsome facts or state of affairs” (“Moral Realism,” p. 111). He says that moral realismcan be characterized in terms of cognitivism: “the belief that for any moral proposition there must be something in virtue of which either it or its negation is true” (“Moral Realism,” p. 112). The two characterizations describe the same moral realism.

It is important here to consider whether Blackburn’s conception of moral realism is the same as Mackie’s conception of moral objectivism. As far as I understand, they are two different theories, although they are frequently treated as the same, that is, Mackie’s moral objectivism is assumed to be the same as moral realism. To be sure, both moral objectivism and moral realism hold that moral truth exist independent of us. But there is a fundamental difference between them. Mackie’s moral objectivism assumes that the discovery of moral truth is a rational procedure. Plato’s Form of the Good and Kant’s Categorical Imperative entail that truth and falsity of moral judgments can be assessed only by reason. Their opposite is moral subjectivism which claims that moral truth is a matter of individual feelings or subjective responses. Mackie specifically emphasizes that wants and desires are crucial factors for deciding truth and falsity of moral judgments (*Ethics*, p. 43). On the other hand, moral realism holds that moral truth consists in moral properties or facts, both of which exist outside of our minds. According to G. E. Moore, moral properties are not natural properties, but exist regardless of our awareness of them. The opposite of moral realism is moral antirealism which claims that moral properties are just the creation of human mind. So, the key words in the difference between

moral objectivism and moral realism are "transcendental values (or transcendent standards)" and "external properties." For the moral objectivists, moral truth depends on transcendental values. On the other hand, for the moral realists, moral truth lies in external moral properties. Mackie's primary opponent is moral objectivism, although he is also opposed to moral realism. Blackburn's primary opponent is moral realism, although he also rejects moral objectivism.

Let us go back to Blackburn's argument against moral realism. Before presenting his own argument, he introduces two well-known arguments against moral realism. He explains the first argument as follows:

> The first argument, then, emphasizes the connection between real assent to a moral proposition and the possession of a certain attitude to its subject. At its strongest, it can be stated as follows: Belief that a thing is good entails possession of a certain attitude towards it. No belief that a thing enters into a state of affairs entails the possession of any attitude towards it. Therefore, belief that a thing is good is not belief that it enters into a state of affairs, and moral propositions must be distinguished from propositions with realistic truth conditions. ("Moral Realism," p. 112)

According to Blackburn, moral realism is the thesis that a state of affairs provides the criterion of the truth value of moral statements. Moral realists may argue as follows: suppose a person encounters a thing called Y, and he comes to have the belief that Y is good. If this belief entails that the person possess a certain attitude toward Y, this proves that moral realism is right, according to the moral realists. The first argument against moral realism simply says that the belief "Y is good" is not a state of affairs. It is because "no belief that a thing enters into a state of affairs entails the possession of any attitude toward it." The first argument is analogous to Mackie's argument against moral objectivism. Mackie says that no objective value motivates us to act. Similarly, according to the first argument, even though we come to have a belief such

as “Y is good,” this belief does not necessarily produce any attitude to behave in accordance with it.

Blackburn says that there is a problem in the first argument. The problem consists in the premise “no belief that a thing enters into a state of affairs entails the possession of any attitude toward it.” He claims that even factual belief can influence the attitude of the person who has the belief. Blackburn gives an example:

> Consider, for example, the belief that a person X is *in possession of the truth* about some matter. This is clearly a factual belief. But if I come to hold this belief about X, doesn’t it follow that my attitude toward X alters? I become prepared to defer to X’s opinion on that matter, or commend his view to other people whom I wish to inform, and each of these is quite naturally construed as possession of an attitude toward X. (“Moral Realism,” p. 112)

Suppose the person, X, is Albert Einstein. When his neighbors meet him first, they may think he is an average person working for the patent office. But years later, they read a newspaper headlining “Albert Einstein, the renowned physicist, won this year’s Nobel Prize.” The neighbors must be proud of him, admire him, talk about his theory of relativity, and so forth. The neighbors’ attitude toward him can change even if their belief about him is factual. If so, the first argument against moral realism is not valid.

Blackburn gives another counterexample against the first argument. This is the belief, “something is alive.” He says, “[T]here are beliefs—for example, that something is alive—that may also entail the possession of an attitude, even if all that can be said about the attitude is that it is one that one feels toward things that are alive, but not toward other things” (“Moral Realism,” p. 112). Suppose rescuers find a man trapped in a file of avalanche for a few hours. At first glance, he looks dead. It seems that he can not move a muscle or breathe. But they soon find out that his heart is still

pumping. He has just lost his consciousness. They shout, "He is alive!" This belief must change the rescuers' attitude toward him. They must try to save his life and to recover his consciousness, instead of putting his body into a plastic bag. Obviously, this is a good case against the first argument.

Blackburn considers a possible objection to his argument: He is extending the notion of attitude to trivial cases of belief. The objector says, "All that they could prove, it may be thought, is that the notion of an attitude can be used to cover such things as a belief that something is alive, or true" ("Moral Realism," p. 112). Blackburn argues that there can be one important feature common in his examples, which "is enough to topple the anti-realist argument that we are considering" ("Moral Realism," p. 113). The feature is that the property of goodness is involved in the cases of factual belief-attitude relation like life or truth. When it is said, "He is alive" or "Einstein is a genius," the speakers' attitude to these propositions contains goodness. That is, it is possible that the states of affairs—i.e., live person or the ingenious scientist—contain the property of goodness. If the property of goodness is involved in the cases of factual beliefs, the same property can be involved in the cases of moral beliefs. The first argument by the antirealist cannot explain this point. Blackburn says, "[I]f it is correct to say that real assent to the proposition that a thing is alive, or true, or a true proposition, then even if real assent to the proposition that a thing is good entails that my attitude toward it is an attitude toward a good thing—namely one of approval—still goodness may be as much a property of thing as life or truth" ("Moral Realism," p. 113).

According to Blackburn, the second argument by an antirealist tries to demonstrate that moral approval is fundamentally different from factual approval. If they are different, it can be said that moral goodness is different non-moral goodness. It is the will, according to the antirealist, that can distinguish moral approval from the other. Blackburn says,

> To this [i.e., Blackburn's claim that life or truth also contain goodness] it will be replied that there are features of moral approval that are not shared by my other examples of 'attitudes', that enable it to be identified independently of statement of a moral belief. These features concern the necessary consequences for our choices and actions of holding a moral position. So the second argument we are to consider hopes to find, in the connection between moral belief and the will, a proof that moral realism is false. In so doing I would hope to find a practical aspect of moral approval that will distinguish it from other examples of attitudes, and so reinstate the first argument. ("Moral Realism," p. 113)

According to the antirealist, moral beliefs enable the will to perform "the actions of holding a moral proposition." This connection between the will and belief is not found in the case of factual or realistic belief. Put simply, even if a person has moral belief about a specific case, his practice of moral actions demands additionally the will of the person. This is different from the case of factual or realistic belief, in which no will is required. Some unique features of moral belief can be discovered in the analysis of the relation between moral belief and will. If the difference between the moral and factual belief is proven, the first argument by the antirealist is still valid.

Blackburn says that there are two difficulties in the antirealist's demonstration. The difficulties come from the fact that it is very difficult to identify the nature of the connection between moral belief and the will. First, it is possible that the connection is falsely described. For example, the connection can be described like this: it is "logically impossible to do something that one believes to be wrong, or logically

impossible to will something that one believes to be bad" ("Moral Realism," p. 113). But the description is not true. There are many cases which show that people can do something that they believe to be wrong. The other difficulty is "the failure to identify a connection that will perform what the argument requires" ("Moral Realism," p. 113). That is, the antirealist can make an identification of the connection, which requires identifying another connection. But the failure to identify the new connection ruins the whole argument by the antirealist. Blackburn gives an example of the second difficulty as follows:

> For example, if the claim is made that necessarily (other things being equal) an action done contrary to moral belief produces remorse or guilt, then unless remorse or guilt can be identified as something further than attitudes felt toward actions that the person believes himself to have performed and that he believes to have been wrong, nothing to the purpose has been achieved. It would be like proving that the belief that a proposition is true cannot be realistic belief because it has this connection with the will . . . . ("Moral Realism," p. 113)

It is not necessarily the will that connect moral belief and attitude because we can will to act differently from our belief. If it is not the will which connects the belief and attitude, the antirealist faces another trouble in identifying the connection. For these reasons, Blackburn rejects the traditional argument against moral realism.

Blackburn's own argument against moral realism begins by identifying two properties of moral truth: supervenience and entailment. Then, he shows "how, jointly, they provide an insuperable difficulty for a realistic theory" ("Moral Realism," p. 114). He defines supervenience as follows:

> (S) A property *M* is supervenient upon properties $N_1 \ldots N_n$ if *M* is not identical with any of $N_1 \ldots N_n$ nor with any truth function of them, and it is logically impossible that a thing should become *M*, or cease to be *M*, or become more or less *M* than before, without changing in respect of some member of $N_1 \ldots N_n$. ("Moral Realism," p. 115)

The other feature is entailment. More precisely, it is the lack of entailment. Blackburn says, "It is that the possession of moral worth is not entailed by the possession of any set of naturalistic properties whatsoever, in any degree whatsoever" ("Moral Realism," p. 116). The precise formula of entailment is stated as follows:

> (E) There is no moral proposition whose truth is entailed by any proposition ascribing naturalistic properties to its subject. ("Moral Realism," p. 116)

Blackburn's notion of entailment needs further explanations. He gives three supplementary explanations. I will consider just two because one is not very crucial for understanding his argument. First, he says, "This is not the claim that moral properties are not identical with any naturalistic ones" ("Moral Realism," p. 116). (E) is not the claim about the identity, but about the entailment. Of course, if moral properties are identical with naturalistic ones, the entailment is guaranteed from naturalistic to moral properties, and vice versa. With regard to the identity, he says, "Moore's concern in *Pricipia Ethica* was to disprove the thesis that there is an identity, not the thesis that there is an entailment" ("Moral Realism," p. 116).

Second, Blackburn says, "(E) is not the claim that there are no naturalistic properties that are *necessarily reasons* for an ascription of a moral property" ("Moral Realism," p. 116). In fact, since (E) is a negative thesis, it is not easy to figure out what can be attained by the entailment. Blackburn compares entailment with *necessary reasoning* to clarify what the entailment requires. One of Blackburn's examples for necessary reasoning is color perception. He says,

> For example, it is very plausible to suppose that some statements about what see to be the case to some observers are necessarily reasons for supposing certain things to be true of the external world. That is, it is plausibly supposed

> to be necessary, and not contingent (for what could it be contingent upon?), that something's seeming to be yellow under appropriate conditions to an apparently normal person is a reason for supposing to be yellow. But few people are prepared to believe that such statements about what seems to be the case can entail that something is the case. ("Moral Realism," p. 117)

It is a necessary reasoning that by seeing something seeming to be yellow, we believe that the object is yellow. But this is not an entailment. Blackburn's another example is induction. He says,

> It is very plausible to suppose that, necessarily, the knowledge of the existence of certain past regularities ought to increase one's confidence in certain appropriately related predictions. Yet there is no entailment between the evidence and the prediction. ("Moral Realism," p. 117)

Blackburn's so-called necessary reasoning is the reasoning for plausibility. In that case, necessary reasoning cannot be the same as entailment, as he says. But to equate necessary reasoning with the reasoning for plausibility is really strange. Most people would say that what he calls necessary reasoning should be called probable reasoning. He is really confusing his readers. At any rate, he applies the meaning of (E) to ethical problems. He says,

> To say that *P* is necessarily a reason for *Q* is to say that, necessarily, coming to know *P* ought to increase one's confidence in *Q*. Now suppose that there exist naturalistic properties such that necessarily coming to know that a thing possess such a property ought to increase one's confidence that it is good. It would by no means follow that (E) is false. For it does not follow that any statement that a thing possess one of these properties can be given that is a conclusive reason for the thing being good, in the sense that having come to know that statement, whatever else one learns about the thing in question, one is right to be certain that it is good. Whereas if an entailment exists, that is precisely what can be done, for if *P* entails *Q*, then the conjunction of *P* with any proposition whatsoever entails *Q*. ("Moral Realism," p. 116)

Let us put "punishing the bad" into *P*, and "social justice" into *Q*. Then the relation between *P* and *Q* is a necessary reasoning relation. That is, the relation means that the punishment of bad people enhances social justice (or goodness). But this is not an

entailment, according to Blackburn. To see why it is not an entailment, let us examine the relation between naturalistic properties and moral propositions like *P* or *Q*. Blackburn says, "there exist naturalistic properties such that necessarily coming to know that a thing possess such a property ought to increase one's confidence that it is good. It would by no means follow that (E) is false." Again, if *P* means "punishing the bad," *P* must have a set of naturalistic properties such as arresting people or imprisoning them. Plainly speaking, any penal system arrests or imprisons people. And those naturalistic properties can promote social justice (*Q*). But the naturalistic properties do not entail *P* or *Q*. In other words, punishing the bad or promotion of social justice is not entailed by arresting and incarcerating people. There can be many cases in which innocent people are arrested and incarcerated. So, the naturalistic properties do not entail moral propositions although they may be necessary reasons for the truth of the propositions.

What is meant by entailment is necessity in logical deduction. Hence, if the notion of entailment works, it should be proved that moral properties can be deductively deduced from naturalistic ones. But such deductions are logically impossible. But I do not know any moral realists who accept the requirement of entailment for their version of moral realism.

Blackburn argues that moral realism cannot give any account of supervenience. Moreover, the lack of entailment is the fatal defect of moral realism. He says,

> Suppose that we ask a moral realist to describe his position, showing it to be compatible with the lack of entailment and supervenience. He has to say that the truth of a moral proposition consists in the existence of a state of affairs, which it reports; that the existence of this state of affairs is not entailed by the existence of other, naturalistic facts; yet that the continuation of these facts entails that moral state of affairs continue as it is. Now this may at first sight

> seem harmless enough, and perhaps it is not actually inconsistent, but it is very mysterious. ("Moral Realism," p. 118)

Blackburn's question is how moral realist can justify the existence of moral state of affairs—or moral properties—which is not entailed by naturalistic facts. A moral realist may try to hold that a moral state of affairs can exist, although it is not entailed by naturalistic facts. But if a moral state of affairs is not entailed by natural facts, what is their relation? Blackburn says that their relation is mysterious,

> To make the peculiarity of the view evident we can put it like this. Imagine a thing *A*, which has a certain set of naturalistic properties and relations. *A* also has a certain degree of moral worth; say, it is very good. This, according to the realist, reports the existence of a state of affairs: *A*'s goodness. Now the existence of this state of affairs is not entailed by *A* being as it is in all naturalistic respects. This means, since all the proposition involved are entirely contingent, that the existence of this state of affairs is not strictly implied by *A* being as it is in all naturalistic respects. That is, it is logically possible that *A* should be as it is in all naturalistic respects, yet this further state of affairs does not exist. ("Moral Realism," p. 118)

We may use the word 'supervenience' to describe the mysterious relation. If it is true that a moral property, goodness, supervenes upon *A* which consists of naturalistic properties, the existence of the moral state of affairs cannot logically proven or detected by the naturalistic properties. Hence, the existence of the state of affairs is not justified by (E). Also, superveninece cannot account for the state of affairs because it is a redundant concept not included in the relation between natural properties and moral properties. Conversely speaking, if moral realism is right, it cannot explain supervenience. Moral realism talks about a three way relation between natural properties, the state of affairs, and moral properties. But supervenience is the binary relation between natural and moral properties. So Blackburn says,

"Supervenience becomes, for the realist, an opaque, isolated, logical fact for which no explanation can be proffered" ("Moral Realism," p. 119).

Moral realists may not care about supervenience; they may not like to use it to justify their thesis that moral properties are real. But Blackburn takes it seriously probably because he wants to show that his projectivism can give a better account of supervenience than moral realism. He makes the following comparison:

> By contrast moral properties seem to have to supervene upon natural ones in some much stronger sense [than the supervenience of color]. It seems conceptually impossible to suppose that if two things are identical in every other respect, one is better than the other. Such a difference *could* only arise if there were other differences between them. So suppose that we have a complete base descriptions of thing, B*, telling us everything that *could* be relevant to determining its A-state. The supervenience claim is that necessarily if there is a thing which is B* and A, then anything else which is like it being B* is like it in being A as well. There is no possible world in which one thing is B* and A, but other things are B* and not A (In this it is important to remember that B* is some complete specification of the B-states of a thing, where as A is some particular A-property—being good to a certain degree, being of a certain color, or whatever). Call this B*/A *supervenience*. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 183)

Let us narrow down the application of B*/A supervenience only to moral case. Then, the following will be helpful to understand the meaning of B*/A supervenience. B is a thing contains natural properties. B* is a set of the complete base descriptions of B. A is a moral property. Hence, B*/A supervevience means that moral property, A, supervenes on B*. For example, suppose a natural fact that a group of hoodlums are mugging an old lady. A complete description of this fact amounts to B*. And a moral property, A ("badness" in this case), supervenes on the natural facts. A question is: why should A be "badness," not "goodness"? That is, it is possible that –A can supervene on B*. In a possible world, B*/ –A supervenience is true instead of

B*/A supervenience. (By the definition of supervenience, a possible world cannot have both B*/A supervenience and B*/ –A supervenience.)

Now if realism is true, instead of supervenience we will have many mixed pairs between B* and A. Because supervenience is out of question, there would be no ban on the mixed world. That is, it is possible to have both B* with A and B* with –A. At least, this is what realism would portray, according to Blackburn. He says about some samples of the mixed pairs in the following:

> There are those in which something is B* is A, and in those everything else B* is A also. But there are those in which things are B* without being A. . . . For at first sight there should be a further mixed kind allowed—in which some things are B* and A; but in which some things are like those whose possibility is already allowed—B* and not A. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 184)

Some concrete cases of paring A and B in the mixed world are: "It would be as though some people are B* and thinking of dogs, and others are B and thinking of aunts . . ." (*Spreading the Word*, p. 185). Because this jumble of mixed worlds is not close to reality, Blackburn says, "So we need to explain the *ban on mixed worlds* . . ." (*Spreading the Word*, p. 184).

Blackburn says that projectivism explains much better than realism why this mixed world does not take place. He says,

> From the anti-realist point of view things are little easier. When we announce the A-commitments we are projecting, we are neither reacting to a given distribution of A-properties, nor speculating about one. So the supervenience can be explained in terms of the constraints upon proper projection. Our purpose in projecting value predicates may demand that we respect supervenience. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 186)

What Blackburn wants to say is the following: For the sake of our moral integrity, we have to maintain the regularity in the supervenience relation. If we say that this is good and that is bad when the two states of affair are exactly alike, we will ruin our

moral integrity. This is why we project values in a consistent manner. Consistency is essential to our integrity. Our attitudes are not the products of external state of affairs. The realist's account cannot properly describe what really happens. Their account can never solve the problem of mixed worlds. In contrast, a projectivist's account explains the consistency of moral values. Our desires or attitudes toward life serve "constraints on proper projection." So without projection or consistent attitude, the ban on the mixed world cannot be explained. This is why projectivism is better than realism, according to Blackburn.

It looks that Blackburn's account is well-organized. But I am not sure whether projectivism is better validated than moral realism. A realist can give a different account of our consistency and our constant values. The realist may argue as follows: It is not the proper projection that resolves the problem of the mixed worlds. The distribution of A-properties may be well ordered in such a way to make supervenience possible. In other words, the consistency of moral values is owed to proper distribution of external moral properties, not proper projection of attitudes. This argument makes sense if we take into account how people achieve good disposition or personality. It is likely that infants and adolescents are not well committed to good values. But the more they are acquainted with the world, the more likely they discover, accept, or internalize good values. Older persons are more likely to be morally wiser than young persons. That is because the projection of our attitudes improves with the understanding of how the world is like. So does the consistency in our moral judgment. Consistency and integrity belong to our moral character; they do not supervene upon the natural properties. If Blackburn wants to attribute consistency

and integrity to his projectivism, the moral realist can say that projection is an essential feature of moral character. That is, a morally good person makes good projections; a morally bad person makes a bad projection. A morally confused person makes inconsistent projections; a morally mature person makes consistent projections. A moral realist can accommodate projection within his theory of moral character. What is real is not simply the state of moral affairs, but also the moral character itself. In fact, the moral character is the most important reality in moral realism.

Not every one endorses Blackburn's account of supervenience. Russ Shafer-Landau presents a different account:

> We explain the ban on mixed worlds by claiming that a duly specified set of nonmoral properties metaphysically *must* give rise to a certain moral property. The reason any given B* cannot give rise both to M and to not-M is that the presence of B* entails the presence of M. For instance, it would be necessarily true that the intentional torture of another for pleasure is wrong. Someone who viewed the torture of innocents as intrinsically desirable is evil in every possible worlds.
>
> This would make some strong form of ethical naturalism correct. ("Supervenience and Moral Realism," p. 148).

According to Shafer-Landau, the reason why we do not have mixed worlds is that "B* cannot give rise both to M and to not-M." This may not be the entailment relation. But Shafer-Landau's notion of supervenience guarantees the consistency of projection: a moral property (M) necessarily follows natural properties (B*). I think this is a more plausible account of supervenience than Blackburn's. Supervenience is a dependent relation between the two kinds of properties. In the case of moral supervenience, moral properties are dependent on factual or natural properties. The naturalistic account of supervenience can explain the dependent relation. But Blackburn's account does not endorse the dependence relation. In my view, he does

not want to endorse it because of his projectivism, according to which moral properties are dependent on subjective feelings, attitudes, or sensibility rather than external natural properties.

Shafer-Landau considers two more possible ways to defend realism. Because he wants to defend realism in general, not just moral realism, I will not consider his other arguments. But his main contention is that projectivism does not necessarily win over realism. I am persuaded by his arguments. So I have to say that Blackburn's critique of moral realism is inconclusive. Given his projectivism, it may be more sensible for him to reject the idea of supervenience. If our moral judgments are the projections of our attitudes, they cannot be regarded as supervenience. Supervenience is the relation of moral properties to natural properties. On the other hand, projection is the relation of moral properties to our attitudes and feelings. Projection is subject-centered; supervenience is object-centered. When we talk about the supervenience of moral properties on natural properties, we do not have to mention the moral subject and his attitude. They are completely irrelevant for supervenience. On the other hand, projection is essentially a subjective affair. I can think of only one reason why Black thinks supervenience is somehow related to his projectivism. Projectivism is a triadic relation: The subject projects his or her attitude to the object. Supervenience is a dyadic relation: Moral properties supervene on natural properties. This dyadic relation can be expanded to include the subject: Moral properties supervene on natural properties for the subject. In this triadic form, supervenience can be taken as equivalent to projection. But this is an abnormal way of talking about supervenience. Normally, supervenience is taken to be totally

subject-independent. But to include the subject for the model of supervenience gives one advantage for talking about the consistency and inconsistency of moral judgments. The triadic model of supervenience can readily account for the inconsistency between different subjects. The moral properties that supervene on one set of natural properties for one subject can be different from those that supervene for another subject. It can account for the inconsistency even for one and the same subject because the attitude of the subject can change over time. By including the subject into the model of supervenience, we can account for the variability of moral properties over the same natural properties. This is conducive for projectivism because variability is an inevitable feature of projectivism.

If the triadic model is adopted for talking about supervenience, we cannot say that moral properties supervene on natural properties. We must say that moral properties supervene on the conjunction of natural properties and the subject's attitude. But I do not know of anyone who advocates this version of supervenience. In the normal talk of supervenience, it is always taken as a dyadic relation. Moreover, the relation between moral properties and natural properties is assumed to be constant and consistent. This is the way Shafer-Landau portrays supervenience. His account is much better than Blackburn's. Even Blackburn never mentions the subject in his discussion of supervenience. But he can meaningfully talk about the inconstancy and inconsistency of supervenience only by implicitly presupposing the presence of subjects. But that is to reduce supervenience to projectivism. If the consistency and constancy of supervenience is totally independent, it is about the best support for moral realism. After all, the central contention of moral realism is the objectivity of

moral properties, which means none other than their total independence from the subjects. So we have to conclude that Blackburn's use of supervenience in his attack on moral realism is really dubious and mysterious. He does not fully spells out what is really going on in his mind. He may be mixing up projectivism and supervenience indiscriminately. At any rate, his readers are reduced to conjectures and speculations on his undisclosed conceptual content.

Expressivism, Quasi-realism, and Relativism

Blackburn regards his projectivism as a version of expressivism because projection is the excpression of attitudes and emotions. So there are a number of terms for his position—prjectivism, expressivism, quasi-realism, and antirealism. But he says that 'quasi-realism' is the best word for representing his position. He says,

> We think of ethical facts, they say, as independent, objective, demanding, and none of this is explicable by expressivism. Or they say, we discuss ethics in terms of propositions that are supposed to be true or false, and this too is something the expressivist cannot explain. To show that such objections are misguided, I invented the persona I call the "quasi-realist," who attempts to remove these obstacles from the expressive position. Quasi-realism seeks to explain, and justify, the forms of thought we practice as we think about what to do and how to behave. ("Securing the Nots," p. 83)

To show how quasi-realism can explain moral truth, Blackburn wants to tackle the biggest obstacle in his path—that is Frege's argument against expressivism. Blackburn says, "P. T. Geach used a point of Frege's to block expressive theories" (*Spreading the Word*, p. 189). According to Frege, there is no object of knowledge in the statements expressing emotions and attitudes. This has become the central contention of logical positivism and emotivism. In particular, Frege says that this

kind of statements do not have constant meaning. Blackburn discusses this point by using the following example (*Spreading the Word*, p. 190):

> It is wrong to tell lies.
> If it is wrong to tell lies, it is wrong to get you little brother to tell lies.
> So It is wrong to get your little brother to tell lies.

Let us call this Lie Example. This is a valid argument in its form. The general form used here is *modus ponens*: *P*; if *P* then *Q*; so *Q*. In order for the argument to be really valid, "It is wrong to tell lies" should have the same meaning in the first and second premise. If the meaning of the sentence is not the same, the argument commits a fallacy of equivocation. Blackburn's example of committing the fallacy is:

> He is working at the bank.
> If he is working at the bank, he must have his feet in the river.
> So He must have his feet in the river. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 190)

Unless the meaning of "he is working at the bank" is the same all the way, the conclusion is not valid.

Frege's argument is that the meaning of "it is wrong to tell lies" may not be the same in the first and the second premise. The first premise expresses the speaker's attitude toward telling lies. But the second may be different. He who utters, "If it is wrong to tell lies, it is wrong to get you little brother to tell lies" does not necessarily say that telling lies is wrong. Probably, his utterance may not indicate anything about his attitude toward telling lies, but describe a moral opinion. Blackburn explains this point as follows:

> For anyone asserting the second, hypothetical premise is *not* expressing an attitude of condemnation toward telling lies. He commits himself to no attitude towards it at all. He just says, 'if telling lies is wrong . . .' without offering any indication of whether he thinks it is. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 190)

He labels the context presented by the arguments above as unasserted context. Then, Frege's argument can be rephrased as follows: an expressivist should show whether or how "expressive theory can cope with unasserted contexts in such a way as to allow sentences the same meaning within them, as they have when they asserted" (*Spreading the Word*, p. 190). Blackburn admits that Frege's argument is reasonable and challenging. He says,

> It is a nice sharp problem. It might seem to provide a swift refutation of expressive theories. In unasserted contexts no attitude, etc. is evinced when the sentence is uttered; the meaning is the same as in direct contexts when such an attitude is evinced; therefore this (variable) feature does not give the (constant) meaning. But before quasi-realism surrenders it needs to see whether expressive theories can give any account at all of these contexts. (*Spreading the Word*, pp. 190-191)

Blackburn thinks that Frege's challenge consists of two questions. First, the question is, "what are we up to when we make these remarks?" What is the nature or status of such remarks as "If it is wrong to tell lies, it is wrong to get you little brother to tell lies"? Are we talking about some truth or just expressing feelings? Blackburn analyzes the question as follows:

> There are in fact two distinct aspects to this problem. Firstly, can we explain what we are up to when we make these remarks? Unasserted contexts show us treating moral predicates like others, as though by their means we can introduce objects of doubt, belief, knowledge, things which can be supposed, queried, pondered. Can the projectivist say why we do this? (*Spreading the Word*, p. 191)

Frege points out that there is a problem in conjoining two kinds of commitments: one expresses an attitude and the other a belief. The first premise of Lie Example ("It is wrong to tell lies") expresses an attitude. And the second may express a belief. Hence, Lie Example combines a statement expressing an attitude with a statement expressing a belief. Blackburn gives another example of a similar illegitimate

combination: “It is wrong to tell lies and your mother is going to be annoyed.” According to Fregean view, the phrases expressing an attitude should not be conjoined with those expressing a belief. This is because the former do not have truth values while the latter do. According to Blackburn, an objector would say, “For suppose, according to the expressive theory, the evaluation is not susceptible of truth or falsity. Then it should not mingle with an operator which needs truths and falsities to work on” (*Spreading the Word*, p. 191). Blackburn replies that our reason for doing so can be explained in a different way. He says,

> But there are ways of easing around this obstacle. One is to expand the way we think of ‘and’. We have to do this anyway, for it can link utterances when they certainly do not express beliefs which are genuinely susceptible of truth-value— e.g. commands: ‘hump that barge and tote that bale’. We would instead say something like this: ‘and’ links commitments to give an overall commitment which is accepted only if each component is accepted. The notion of a commitment is then capacious enough to include both ordinary beliefs, and these other attitudes, habits, and prescriptions. (*Spreading the Word*, pp. 191-192)

According to Blackburn, there is nothing absurd in conjoining the statements containing truth values with the statements having no truth values. There is no necessity for rejecting this kind of the union. Rather the union of the two different kinds of statements expands the usage of ampersand to “give an overall commitment which is accepted only if each component is accepted.” The expanded use of ampersand can answer the question, “What are we up to when we make these remarks?” Blackburn says, “The one sentence conjoins the two disparate commitments, and since we often want to communicate that we have both, it is hardly surprising that we have a way of doing it. That gives us an idea of *what we are up to* in offering the conjunction” (*Spreading the Word*, p. 191)

The second question raised by Frege's objection is: "how can attitudes as opposed to beliefs have implications?" (*Spreading the Word*, p. 192) It is agreed that the expressions of attitudes have no objective meaning, while those of beliefs have it. Even if the two expressions are conjoined with each other, the conjoined statement may not have objective meaning. If so, moral statements may not have any truth values, and quasi-realism is not defensible any more. This is the central point of Fregean objection. Blackburn tries to solve the problem by counting on the fact that "there is also need to communicate, revise, and adjust attitude" ("Securing the Nots," p. 84). This fact serves the objectivity of comparing or ranking various attitudes. He says,

> At this point we must turn again to the projective picture. A moral *sensibility*, on that picture, is defined by a function from *input* of belief to *output* of attitude. Now not all such sensibilities are admirable. Some are coarse, insensitive, some are plain horrendous, some are too quick to form strict and passionately held attitudes, some too sluggish to care about anything. But it is extremely important to us to rank sensibilities, and to endorse some and to reject others. For one of the main features affecting the desirability of the world we live in is the way other people behave, and the way other people behave is largely a function of their sensibility. So much is obvious enough. And amongst the features of sensibilities which matter are, of course, not only the actual attitudes which are the output, but the interactions between them. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 192)

We can compare, rank, endorse, or reject moral sensibilities. The fact that we communicate our moral sensibilities paves the way for their evaluation. By gaining the objective aspect of moral discussion and judgment, Blackburn says, Frege's question can be fully answered. Due to their quasi-objectivity, moral judgments and claims can have truth values. According to Blackburn, it also means that the conditional in Lie Example, "If it is wrong to tell lies, it is wrong to get you little brother to tell lies," expresses the speaker's moral attitude. He says, "The conditional

form shows me expressing this endorsement. Of course, it is an endorsement which is itself the expression of a moral point of view" (*Spreading the Word*, p. 192). If so, the Lie Example does not commit the fallacy of equivocation, according to Blackburn.

In fact, Blackburn thinks that the conditional form represents best our moral commitment. He calls it "correspondence conditionals." The conditional means "[I]f we exercise our sensory and cognitive faculties properly and end up believing that *p*, then *p*" ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealist," p. 167). In contrast, some others like Kant or Hare believe that moral commitments are expressed by a command such as, "You ought to do X." Blackburn's claim about the conditional may be dubious because of its unsophisticated form. For example, the conditional, "If it is wrong to tell lies, it is wrong to get you little brother to tell lies," has a simple uncontroversial form because the meaning in the if-clause is repeated in the main clause. But our moral commitments occasionally are more complicated than this. Blackburn takes some examples of controversial commitments as follows: "if something ought to be done, any means to it ought to be allowed" or "if a group has been discriminated against, it is now right to give it better treatment" (*Spreading the Word*, p. 193).

Blackburn thinks there is one more obstacle in establishing the notion of moral truth. That is relativism. Even if we can talk about the truth and falsity of moral claims, it does not necessarily mean that moral statements can be solidly evaluated and validated. If relativism prevails, there is no significance in talking about the truth and falsity of moral judgments. In particular, many critics argue that projectivism ends up as relativism because projectivism has no independent criterion of right and wrong or good and bad. Hence Blackburn turns to the examination of relativism.

The critics' point is that projectivism does not approve an external standpoint for the consideration of moral truth. Blackburn questions whether there really is an external point of view beyond human sensibilities. He says,

> The right response to this relativistic threat is to think about the standpoint that the objector occupies. The objector asks us to occupy an external standpoint, the standpoint of the exile from all values, and to see our sensibilities entirely from without. But it is only by using our sensibilities that we judge value. So it is as if we are asked to judge colors with a blindfold on, and the inevitable result is that values are lost, and our sense of ourselves as reliable indicators of them is lost along with them. ("Securing the Nots," p. 89)

According to Blackburn, the objector asks us to occupy an external point for the analysis of our sensibilities. But Blackburn is saying that this request is analogous to asking us to judge colors with a blindfold on. If we are blindfolded, we lose the ground of talking about colors. Similarly, if we occupy an external point, we lose the ground of talking about our moral sensibilities. However, the objector may say that Blackburn's argument here is not good because there can be an external point at least in the case of color. The objector says, "[W]e think of a neutral, colorless world (the scientific world, perhaps) and a distribution of sensibilities, with some creatures responsive to some lights, and others to different ones, but each of them able to use color vision to discriminate surfaces and get around the world efficiently" ("Securing the Nots," p. 89). Blackburn says that the objector might be right on the matter of color sensation. The objection makes sense because at least we can understand how the black-and-white world looks like. But he says that the objection is not a real threat to his theory because the moral world has nothing that corresponds to the colorless scientific world. For him, it just makes no sense even to talk of an external

point of view for moral affairs, that is, external to our human perspective. Such an external point of view would be a view from nowhere.

After dismissing the idea of an external perspective, Blackburn says that this discussion has nothing to do with the question of truth:

> In none of this is there truth or error—there is no sense to saying that one particular color sensitivity gets the world *right*, so how can I regard myself and others like me as reliable about colors? The answer is that if this is the playing field, I cannot; but this playing field is not level to the point of being a precipice. My confidence about colors is simply not beholden to this kind of challenge. ("Securing the Nots," p. 89)

There is no way to talk about the rightness or wrongness of color perception. There is no question of truth and falsity in color sensitivities. Although we can be indifferent about the different color sensitivities, Blackburn says, we cannot feel the same indifference about the different moral sensibilities. If some people have extremely different color perceptions from ours, we can just ignore the extreme cases. But Blackburn says that we cannot ignore the extremely different cases of moral sensibility,

> In the theory of value the situation is slightly more complex, because in the secondary quality case it is not difficult to imagine simply shrugging aside the possible or actual existence of creatures with radically different sensitivities. We simply ignore them as we make our own discriminations and award ourselves our own titles to knowledge . . . . In the case of values a radically different sensibility seems to pose more of a challenge. This challenge is, however, not posed by the mere actual or possible existence of a different way of taking things. ("Securing the Nots," p. 89)

We cannot easily ignore the extreme cases of moral sensibility, because they pose a threat or challenge to our own morality. We would not feel such threat against those extreme cases, which we believe to be inferior to our moral sensibility. Blackburn says,

> What would be of interest would be a sensibility that cannot be dismissed as inferior, and which issues in this attitude. But in assessing the chances of there being such a thing, we are back working from within. We are no longer playing the fake externalist game of trying to certify values without using values. ("Securing the Nots," p. 89)

The notion of inferiority and superiority is evidently important in talking about different moral sensibilities. How do we assess their inferiority and superiority? Blackburn says that their assessment is not the fake externalist game. The assessment is essentially the comparison of values, which can never be done by taking an external view point situated beyond the world values. Blackburn assumes that any external perspective is value-neutral. Such a neutral perspective is surely irrelevant and useless for comparing and ranking values. Let us consider comparing my value system (or my moral sensibility) with your value system (or your moral sensibility). Let us also assume that there is no external perspective for this comparison. Hence the comparison is a binary relation. By comparison, I can say that my value system is superior to yours. You can say exactly the opposite: Your value system is better than mine by comparison. There is no *tertium quid* for saying which of the two comparisons is right or true, and which is wrong or false. Thus the direct comparison of two value systems inevitably leads to relativism.

The model of comparison can be expanded. Let us imagine that I can compare my value system with yours by appealing to an objective standard, which is shared by you and me. Then I can say that my value system is better than yours by this objective standard. And you may even agree with my assessment. That is, the objective standard appears to be the only way to avoid relativism. Then the comparison of values is no longer a binary relation. It becomes a triadic relation. But

Blackburn regards this triadic model as externalism, and the binary model as internalism. He firmly believes that externalism is false or a fake game because we can never get out of our internal world of values. He says that his quasi-realism is based on internal viewpoint. But he insists that his theory is not a theory of relativism. He gives his reasons as follows:

> But relativism tries to go beyond the platitude and derive from it something significant for the concept of ethical truth. But what can it derive? It aims at something such as this: in some cases it is equally true that *p* and that *–p* (one is true for us, and the other for them, for instance). But if *p* is one of my commitments, I have no business allowing that it is true that *–p*. Doing so induces incoherence in my set of attitudes. Of course, I can allow the solecism "it is true for them that *–p*" when this just means that they hold *–p*, since that gets us nowhere beyond the platitude. ("Securing the Nots," p. 90)

Relativism is unacceptable simply because it is incoherent. Its incoherence can be avoided by disavowing the notion of truth and falsity in the moral domain. A relativist can say that moral assertions are neither true nor false. But some relativists do not want to take this position. Hence the relativists can be divided into two camps. One camp belongs to noncognitivism, and the other to cognitivism. Only the latter can retain the notion of moral truth, but their truth can be maintained only by excluding those who have values different from theirs. Blackburn rejects this sort of exclusion. He says that his projectivism does not exclude the opposite opinion. The projectivist is willing to examine and compare the opposite view with his own view to attain the truth. Therefore a projectivist must behave differently from a relativist, when he encounters a different moral sensibility.

> Perhaps the idea [of a projectivist] is that I should not have a commitment to *p*, once I recognize the other sensibility. But why not? As I said above, it is only if the other sensibility commands some respect that my own commitment is even prima facie threatened, and then in balancing the respect, the threat, and the depth of my commitment I am back working from within my own

> framework of values, as of course I must do. There is no telling in advance whether it is the respect for the other sensibility, or the depth of my own commitment that is likely to lose in this process. ("Securing the Nots," p. 90)

At the outset of comparison, the projectivist does not know in advance which will be the winner, his own sensibility or that of his opponent. If he comes to respect his opponent's sensibility more than his, he will yield to it. This is indeed a commendable attitude. But Blackburn never explains why and how the objectivist will come to respect one moral sensibility more than the other. The comparison of different moral sensibilities is taking place in Blackburn's black box. What may take place in this black box may be nothing more a matter of feeling. That is, when the projectivist compares the sensibilities of his own and his opponent, he may come to feel that one is better than the other. That feeling is a matter of projection. This is the projection upon projections. The projectivist's moral sensibility is the projection of his attitude; his opponent's moral sensibility is the projection of his attitude. After comparing these two sensibilities, the projectivist feels that he feels greater respect for his opponent's sensibility than for his own. This feeling is the projection upon the two previous projections. Thus Blackburn can stick to projectivism from the beginning to the end. We can talk about many levels of projection, that is, the first level, the second level, etc.

I have offered my conjecture for maintaining the consistency in Blackburn's projectivism. I want to stress that this is no more than a conjecture. Blackburn never says anything remotely resembling it. But I do not want to allow my conjecture to obscure one thing he clearly says. He believes that one can come to an objectively true assessment of two different moral sensibilities by their comparison. This belief

may be called Blackburn's postulate for his quasi-realism. This postulate is essential for his belief that moral judgments have truth values. Here lies the critical difference between his projectivism and relativism. The relativists believe that there is no way to secure an objectively true ranking or assessment of different moral sensibilities. Blackburn highlights this difference. He says that relativism is not only infertile in producing objective moral values, but also contains a very narrow sense of moral truth, that is, true from one's own perspective. Blackburn says that this is the most serious problem of relativism:

> This is the deep problem of relativism. It is not the vague and unfounded disquiet that I have no right to judge unfavourably people with any other opinion—those who practice human sacrifice, or murder Jews, for instance. Of course I have. My attitudes, and those involved in any system I could conceive of which might be superior to mine, alike condemn them. The deep problem is the suspicion that other, equally admirable sensibilities, over which I can claim no superiority of my own, lead to divergent judgments. This does take away my right to think of mine as true, which is equivalent to unsettling my commitments. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 199)

The notion of superiority comes back again. As long as I feel that my moral sensibility is superior that of my opponent, I have no problem. I can easily say that mine is true and that the opponent's is false. But I cannot do this when I feel that my moral sensibility is not superior to that of my opponent. A relativist would say that both are equally true. But Blackburn does not want to take this position because to do so "does take away my right to think of mine as true, which is equivalent to unsettling my commitments." The relativistic notion of truth undermines the very conception of truth. He says,

> It [i.e., the fallacy of relativism allowing moral views to diverge] means that an evaluative system should contain the resources to transcend the tree structure [i.e., the structure of divergence]: evidence that there is a node [of diverging views] itself implies that it is wrong to maintain either of the

> conflicting commitments. It is itself a signal that the right attitude . . . is not that expressed by either of these partial perspectives. The better perspective may judge the merits equal, or it may award the prize to just one view . . . . So in practice evidence that there is a node is just treated as a signal that the truth is not yet finally argued, and it goes into discussions as part of evidence. We are constrained to argue and practice as though truth is single, and this constraint is defensible in spite of the apparent possibility of the tree-structure. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 201)

Whenever there are divergent perspectives, they should be taken as partial perspectives. And we should see a better perspective, from which we can judge the respective merit of those partial perspectives. Though Blackburn rejects the notion of external perspectives, he advocates the notion of better perspectives. As long as there are divergent views on the same topic, he says, we take it as evidence that the truth is not yet attained. Here is another postulate of his: the unity of truth. He says, "We are constrained to argue and practice as though truth is single." To talk about a better perspective is easy and nobody would object to having a better perspective. But how can we tell whether one perspective is better or worse than another. Black does not consider this question. He only says that a non-relativistic system of evaluation "should contain the resources to transcend" diverging views. But he does not explain what he means by "the resources to transcend diverging views." Does he mean something like appealing to the transcendent values like Platonic Forms? No, he does not. He says that the transcendence must be secured by the "attitudes of working from within." It must be the transcendence of internalism rather than externalism. But how can one attain transcendence within the domain of one's attitude? Is this idea of internal transcendence not self-defeating and self-contradictory? "Transcendence" is supposed to mean to transcend one own perspective or the perspective based on one's own attitudes. But Blackburn does not want to accept

Platonic Forms, and at the same time he refuses to be trapped in the relativistic truths. How can he retain his projectivism and still talk about moral truth without succumbing to Platonism or relativism? This is the biggest question and challenge for Blackburn.

Projectivism and Relativism

In his later work, Blackburn comes back to the issue of relativism. His reconsideration of relativism was prompted by his critics. One of his critics Adrian W. Moore said,

> If it is true that 'an ethic is the propositional reflection of the dispositions and attitudes, policies and stances, of people,' as Simon Blackburn says in summary of the quasi-realism that he champions in this excellent and wonderfully provocative book (p. 310), then it seems to follow that different dispositions, attitudes, policies and stances—different *conative states*, for short—will issue in different ethics, each with an equal claim to truth; and this in turn seems to be one thing that could be reasonably meant by that slippery polyseme 'relativism'. ("Quasi-realism and Relativism," p. 150)

Moore says that projectivism is bound to lead to relativism if the moral subjects operate with different conative states and attitudes. He calls this sort of relativism the first kind of relativism, which Blackburn wants to reject. But Moore considers the second kind of relativism, which he calls the modal relativism. This type of relativism is described in modal language: "[H]ad our conative states been different, we might have applied different ethical standards *and it might have been right for us to do so*; we might have had different beliefs *and those different ethical beliefs might have been true*" ("Quasi-realism and Relativism," pp. 150-151). He says that the modal relativism is based on the possible world:

> Now if my claim about ethical quasi-realism is correct, then a parallel claim about modal quasi-realism must be correct too; that is to say, modal quasi-realism must also entail relativism, in the form, roughly, that we might have acknowledged different possibilities and it might have been right for us to do so. However, while there may be room to deny that the relativism about ethics is itself an ethical view, there is no denying that this is a modal view, a view about what is possible. ("Quasi-realism and Relativism," p. 153)

Moore illustrates modal relativism by using Non-Euclidean geometry for an example. We can build a very different system of geometry from Euclidean geometry. Because each system employs different arithmetic concepts, each system respectively proposes different geometrical truths. A person can approve one system without conceding the other system. The geometrical difference between the two systems cannot be resolved. Blackburn has maintained that the difference of moral sensibilities in the simple relativism can be resolved by comparing them. But the comparison of the Euclidean and Non-Euclidean geometries cannot resolve their differences. Therefore Moore holds that the modal relativism should present a much more difficult problem for Blackburn than the simple relativism. Moore further elaborates on his notion of modal relativism by extending it from geometry to arithmetic:

> Had we acknowledged different arithmetical possibilities, and had it been right for us to do so, this would have shown that we were using different concepts. For to say that we might have acknowledged different arithmetical possibilities is not, at least in this context, to say that we might have acknowledged the arithmetical possibility of propositions that we currently take to be arithmetically impossible. It is to say rather that we might have acknowledged the arithmetical possibility of propositions that we currently lack the concepts even to express. We can concede that rival arithmetics are possible, then without losing our grip on the necessity of our own, just as we can concede that non-Euclidean geometries are possible without losing our grip on the necessity of the proposition that between any two Euclidean points there is at most one Euclidean straight line. ("Quasi-realism and Relativism," pp. 154-155)

Moore then applies the modal relativism to ethics. It is possible to adopt moral concepts very different from ours and build a completely new system of ethics. He says, "We might have had different ethical beliefs, not just in the sense that we might have had ethical beliefs whose negations were of the same type as those we currently have, but also in the sense that we might have had ethical beliefs that we currently lack the concepts even to formulate" ("Quasi-realism and Relativism," p. 155). Because we do not even have the concepts for understanding this imaginary system of ethical beliefs, we cannot compare them with our ethical beliefs. Hence there is no way to resolve the difference between our ethical belief and the imaginary ones. In fact, we cannot even state the difference. Therefore, the modal relativism is much stronger than the simple relativism, and Blackburn has not even considered this version of relativism in his critique of relativism. But he is not impressed by this criticism. He says,

> Moore pursues this [i.e., a view from nowhere or a view rejecting single truth] through his very interesting account of modal quasi-realism, parallel to moral quasi-realism, a position with which he is in sympathy. When I developed that position, I said pessimistically that the modal quasi-realist seems faced with a place where explanation gives out, a place where there is a 'kind of surd' in our attempts at naturalism. Moore pushes this a little further, suggesting that we can hold that there might have been different arithmetics, even while maintaining a grip on the necessity of our own. We would say that seven plus five must be twelve, but at the same time concede that there might be arithmetical propositions we lack the concepts to express, and that both would not include this truth, and would in some robust way be rivals of our arithmetic. ("Replies," p. 173)

He is not even sure what it means to have an arithmetic system different from ours. He says that it is unthinkable that seven plus five is other than twelve. Similarly, he says, it is equally incomprehensible to have a rival ethical system, for whose description we lack the concepts. In short, the modal relativism makes sense if

it is described in a incomprehensible language. On the other hand, if it is stated in normal modal language, the modal relativism cannot be any different from the simple relativism. Both of them are based on different attitudes and feelings. He mentions three approaches for their resolution: comparison, reflection, and discussion. I say "mention" because he never fully discusses these three approaches. We have already noted the method of comparison. He now introduces the method of critical reflection:

> While in the twentieth century we have all been impressed by the diversities of human nature and human culture, we should also remember the constancies that impressed earlier thinkers. We are social animals, with certain biological needs. We have to coordinate our efforts; we have to establish systems of property and promise-keeping and sometimes even government. We can then take comfort in reflecting that there are not so many admirable, coherent, mature, livable ethical systems on offer; indeed rather than being faced with a whole shopping basket of such things, our usual problem is to find as much as one that survives elementary critical reflection. (*Ruling Passions*, p. 308)

The rich diversity of ethical systems does not mean that they are all excellent. Most of them cannot survive our elementary critical reflection. So we can easily weed them out. This process of weeding out is critical reflection. It appears to be basically the same method as the method of comparison. Just as the method of comparison is in need of normative standards, the elementary critical reflection cannot be conducted without appealing to some standards. Instead of offering these standards, Blackburn mentions discussion as the third method,

> What then of the representational appearance of ethics, and its titles to truth and knowledge? Here I rehearse moves that have come to be known under the title of 'quasi-realism'. The leading idea, again, is very simple. It is that our attitudes and practical stances need discussion. They put us in conflict with each other, or in conflict with ourselves. Even simple prescriptions need discussion and defense, and the overall field of obligations and values is much more complex still. ("Precis of *Ruling Passions*," p. 127)

It is impossible to conduct ethical discussion without using ethical standards. Without such standards, our ethical discussion would be pointless. To be sure, the method of discussion has been a popular topic in political philosophy in the past century. In 1973, J. Habermas proposed it as his theory of ideal dialogue in his "Theory of Truth" and expanded it in his subsequent writings. In 1980, Bruce Ackerman advocated it in his *Social Justice in the Liberal State.* Neither of these two precedents is mentioned by Blackburn. Although both Habermas and Ackerman endorse the method dialogue, they have somewhat different aims. Ackerman's social dialogue is to reach social agreement by overcoming the difference of values and beliefs. Habermas' ideal dialogue is far more ambitious. Its aim is not merely to reach some agreement, but to find ethical and political truths. Blackburn is adopting this ambitious version of discussion. He holds that the moral truths can be determined and secured by using the method of discussion along with the methods of comparison and critical reflection. It is reasonable to assume that discussion can dissolve some disagreements and obtain some agreements. Why should we assume that such agreements are also the moral truths at the same time? We can easily imagine many kinds of agreements that have nothing to do with truth. Imagine two flat-earthers agree on the shape of the earth. What does their agreement have to do with the true shape of the earth. In fact only a few hundred years ago, there were not only two people, but millions and millions of them who agreed that the earth was flat. Should we say that the flat-earth view was true then, but it is no longer true. This is a new form of relativism. If truth is grounded on agreements, it must be relativized for the

makers of agreements. The agreement-relativism is a special version of belief-relativism because agreements are based on beliefs.

In his theory of ideal dialogue, Habermas adapted Charles Peirce's model for reaching the scientific truths: The truth is the final consensus that will be reached by all participants after a long process of inquiry. There is one important difference between Peirce's original model and Habermas' adaptation. The scientific inquiry involves the object of inquiry, for example, those who study geology know that the earth is the object of their inquiry. The scientific object is physically present and empirical accessible. But there is no corresponding physical object for moral inquiry. This is why Blackburn calls his theory of morals quasi-realism rather than realism. This is another way of saying that the objects of moral inquiry are not really present and accessible in the same way the empirical objects are. When the scientists agree on some theory, they can say that they agree that their theory is true of their object. There are two ways of stating the relation of agreement and truth: (1) Their theory is true because they agree on it, and (2) they agree on their theory because they think it is true. Most scientists will take (2) rather than (1). If (1) were the case, they would say that the Ptolemy system was true because it was agreed on by all astronomers before Copernicus. Because the object of their inquiry is empirically accessible, the scientists can talk about the truth of their theories in relation to the object. Hence they do not even have to compare one theory with another to test the truth of their theory. When Newton discovered gravity, he did not have to compare his theory of gravity with another competing theory. He directly related his theory to its object. But this sort of direct relation between theory and object is impossible in moral inquiry.

Therefore moral inquiry has to depend on the comparison of theories against one another rather than the comparison of a theory with its object.

When the scientists overcome the divergence of their opinions and reach an agreement, they can say that they are coming closer to their object of inquiry. They can assume that their inquiry is asymptotic toward the object. This is the picture Peirce had in mind in proposing that the final agreement can be taken as the truth. But the picture of asymptotic progress cannot be deployed without presupposing the object of inquiry. But Habermas has employ Peirce's model without the recourse to the object of inquiry. Normative discussions without such an objective recourse can easily deteriorate to wild talks. Just imagine that Habermas tries to conduct moral discussion on abortion with an emotivist. Habermas says to him that it is true that abortion is wrong. The emotivist will say that it makes no sense to bring in the notion of truth in the discussion because the only thing he can say meaningfully is how he feels about abortion. Habermas may say that he does not care how anyone feels about abortion because he wants to know whether his view is true of false. They cannot even get the discussion started in a meaningful manner. This sort of problem is inconceivable scientific discussions, because scientists know clearly what they are talking about. On the other hand, Habermas and the emotivist cannot even agree on what they are talking about. One of them thinks that he is talking about his feelings about abortion; the other think that he is talking about abortion itself, that is, whether it is right or wrong. Their discussion cannot be focused on the object of their inquiry because there is no such object. Even if they can happily reach an agreement, they cannot say that they are any closer to the object of their inquiry. Hence their

agreement may have nothing to do with the truth. The truth value of an agreement can be established only by relating it to the object.

When Blackburn talks about discussion as a method of reaching moral truth, he does not stress agreement. In fact, he stresses disagreement or divergence as "a signal that the truth is not yet finally argued" (*Spreading the Word*, p. 201). He says that strong divergence takes away "my right to think of mine as true, which is equivalent to unsettling my commitments (*Spreading the Word*, p. 199). He banks all his hopes on the unity of truth ("Truth is single"). He stresses the universality of moral truths:

> The aspiration to universality might turn out to be erroneous, but I have always wanted a theory that protects it. Kicking friendly dogs is not wrong here or there, but wrong, wherever it is found and whatever the agent thinks about it. ("Replies," p. 173)

"Universality" means the same as "objectivity" for Blackburn. He recognizes the objective principles of fairness and impartiality that operates everywhere (*Ruling Passions,* p. 307). They are indispensable for any social cooperation and coordination. Blackburn's method of discussion serves two purposes. First, it goes beyond the divergence of moral sensibilities and finds the common ground in the universality of general principles. Second, it can reach agreements. But the function of agreements is to establish truths, but some social standards for social cooperation. Here he is repeating what Mackie has already advocated.

In the last chapter, we noted that Mackie has models for moral perception and truth: projection and contract. Blackburn also winds up with two models of morality: the model of projection and the model of discussion. The latter can produce social contracts or agreements. For Blackburn, the model of projection is fundamental and

the model of discussion and construction is subordinate to the model of projection. Like Mackie, he produces a two-tier ethical model. In fact, the two models are isomorphic with each other.

I will try to summarize our investigation in this chapter. First, Blackburn winds up with a two-tier system of ethics. Second, he tries to secure moral truths on the postulate of the unity of truth and universal principles. These two points raise an important question: Is it the primary order of projection or the secondary order of discussion that generates the notion of universal truth and universal principles? I cannot tell what Blackburn's view is on this question because he does not talk about it. But I have the impression that it is the primary order of projection that provides the sense of universal truths and the universal principles. He says, "Kicking friendly dogs is not wrong here or there, but wrong, wherever it is found and whatever the agent thinks about it" ("Replies," p. 173). The sense of universality is not the result of discussion. It is in the agent's thought even before the discussion. He also says, "We are constrained to argue and practice as though truth is single, and this constraint is defensible in spite of the apparent possibility of the tree-structure" (*Spreading the Word*, p. 201). Here again the unity of truth is not the result of discussion. On the contrary, it is deeply embedded in our feeling prior to discussion. Blackburn says, "We are constrained to argue and practice as though truth is single." That is, he is constrained by his primitive feeling, which is one of his primary attitudes. These primary attitudes provide the bedrock base for all moral discussions and practice. They are the logical base for talking about moral truths, too. Now our question is "What are the ultimate ground for these primary feelings and primary attitudes?"

By its nature, we already noted, projectivism is most likely to lead to relativism because our attitudes are subjective. Suppose that I like snails. There is no reason why I should expect that you should like snails, too. What is good for me need not be good for you. This subjective tendency cannot be tolerated in our moral attitudes and judgments. This is what is meant by Blackburn's postulate of universality for moral attitudes and judgments. But the postulate of universality and moral attitudes are not two separate things. The demand of universality is an essential feature of moral feelings. Given this phenomenology of moral sensibility, Blackburn's first question should be whether the universality of moral feeling can survive our critical reflection, the basic stage in his moral inquiry. I do not know whether he has ever subjected his moral feelings to this sort of critical reflection. But we may assume that he will say that the demand of universality has survived his critical reflection. If so, our next question is "How can he account for this universal demand?" I can see two ways of answering this question: (1) the emotive way and (2) the rational way. The emotive way is to say that the demand of universality is the nature of our moral feelings. That is, this is just the way we feel about our moral feelings. If it is simply the way we feel, it cannot have anything to do with truth. Universal truths cannot be based on universal feelings, especially the feelings of any individual, because they may not be shared by other individuals. The rational way is to say that the universal feelings reflect the rational intuition of universal transcendent objects such as the Platonic Form of Justice. Since the transcendent objects cannot be perceived or felt by empirical intuitions, their intuition must be rational. Plato would say that the rational intuition generates the universal sense of justice. Thus universal

(transcendent) feelings can be explained by reference to universal (transcendent) objects. Their referential relation to objects is the epistemic ground for talking about their truth or falsity.

A while ago, I said that Habermas' model of ideal dialogue is an adaptation of Peirce's model and that the adaptation cannot work well because it has to leave out the reference to the object of inquiry. The rational way of interpreting the demand of universality reinstates the reference to the object in our reflection on moral feelings and attitudes. The object thus reinstated is not empirical but transcendent. But the transcendent object is not an object of description. For example, the statement that slavery is unjust does not describe the Platonic Form of Justice or Injustice. This statement passes a judgment on the natural or social fact of slavery. The transcendent object functions as a transcendent principle or standard of reference. On the other hand, the empirical object is an object of description. In spite of this difference, the revamped model of normative dialogue or inquiry is isomorphic in its structure to Peirce's original model. In fact, we can say that the method of dialogical inquiry follows basically the same format. The empirical inquiry is addressed to the empirical objects; the normative inquiry is addressed to the normative objects. The empirical object or state of affairs is natural. We may say that the normative object or state of affairs is non-natural because our moral values are not necessarily natural. If moral values or normative objects are just natural, moral values can be discovered by Peirce's model. Moral values are not naturally because they are linked transcendent standards or values—such as universality. Hence we can talk about the normative objects in two ways: (1) the transcendent standard or value itself and (2) the state of

affairs constituted in reference to the standard or value. If we do not admit the normative objects, then we have to say that the normative inquiries have no objects, whereas the empirical enquiry is governed by the empirical objects. The objectless inquiry surely sounds like a wild goose chase. If there are no objects for normative inquiries, there can no truths for them, either. This is my argument for the existence of objective values, which is fundamentally the same as the one I made against Mackie in the last chapter. To put it another, objective values can be secured only appealing to the transcendent objects. The fact that I can make the same argument against both Mackie and Blackburn shows that their moral ideas are basically the same, although Blackburn tries to distinguish his position from Mackie's by his harsh critique. His distinction is only in name, not in substance.

Chapter 3

Sensibility Theory

We saw that Blackburn had the difficulty of establishing moral truth with his projectivism. The projection of personal attitudes or sensibility does not guarantee the reinstatement of the notion of moral truth or the objectivity of moral judgments. Sensiblity theorists like John McDowell and David Wiggins correctly point out the limit of projectivism. They hold that the projection of sensibilities is just one aspect of moral epistemology. They think the sensibilities are inseparably tied to the moral properties in the object. If so, moral sensibilities can be discussed objectively, that is, in terms of objects, and the discussion may be able to secure the ground of moral truth. Although McDowell and Wiggins have developed their theories of moral sensibility separately, they agree on many points. They are helping and complementing each other rather than competing against each other. I will mention their differences when the differences are worth noticing. Otherwise, their views will be treated together.

Moral Truth and Moral Cognitivism

Let us begin with Wiggins' notion of moral cognitivism. He believes that moral judgments and claims have truth values. He says that he can build moral cognitivism which excludes not only emotivism, prescriptivism, irrealism, antirealism, etc, but also Mackie's error theory ("Moral Cognitivism, Moral Relativism and Motivating Moral Beliefs," p. 62). That is, moral statements have truth values by virtue of moral properties, whose objective existence is supported by moral sensibilities. And if a

moral statement is proven true, it is not contaminated by the Mackian error. Wiggins wants to demarcate moral cognitivism from moral realism for a few reasons. For example, he says, "the name 'moral realism' has unwanted associations with moral absolutism, a commitment need not incur" ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," pp. 62-63). It is true that Plato's Form of the Good or Kant's Categorical Imperative is linked to more or less an absolute notion of moral truth. Wiggins does not want to approve the notion of absolute moral truth. Also, realism is usually contrasted with idealism or mentalism. He says that moral cognitivism is different from realism because moral cognitivism is not contrasted with idealism or mentalism. He says,

> Thirdly, in metaphysics, 'realism' has associations with the contrast between realism and idealism and between realism and mentalism. In philosophy of mathematics it has associations with the contrast between Platonic realism and conceptualism. Surely the label 'realism' consorts ill as it figures in these contrasts with the chief thing that the moral cognitivist is anxious to persuade the world of. ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," p. 63)

Wiggins' notion of moral cognitivism is different from the metaphysical realism, namely, the thesis that there are external objects and properties independent of human minds. This is the sort of realism that should be distinguished from Wiggins' cognitivism.

Both Mackie and Blackburn support moral cognitivism. Even Hare, a prescriptivist, insists that his position is cognitive. He holds that moral words contain the meaning of universalizability and that only the universalizable moral claims or statements are true. Truth is the essential ingredient of cognitivism. Hence Wiggins feels the need to clarify the relation of truth to cognitivism, and this need to his two tasks as follows:

> First, the cognitivist needs an independent, relatively uncontroversial fix on the idea of truth. So he needs, I think, to find a way to enumerate the marks of the concept *true*, in terms (unlike *correspondence or matter of truth*) that are innocent of *parti pris* with respect to the question of morality . . . . Let that be task (2a). And then, once he has identified these marks (contrast the more controversial marks on which such things as the issue of bivalence might be claimed to depend) and once the cognitivist and anti-cognitivist are better placed to agree about what the cognitivist would have to show, the cognitivist must try to show how truth could actually be attained in moral question. Let that be task (2b). ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," pp. 64-65)

Wiggins' first task (2a) is to establish an idea of truth for morality, and his second task (2b) is to show that moral truth can be attained. To carry out the first task, he proposes five marks of truth as follows:

> If this is right so far, then I think we ought to expect that among the marks of the concept of truth will be the following;
> (1) If x is true, then x passes muster in that dimension of assessment in which x demands to be assessed by virtue of being the sort of thing it is, thus in the primary dimension of assessment for x;
> (2) If x is true, then x will under favourable circumstances command convergence, and the best explanation of the existence of this convergence will either require the actual truth of x or be inconsistent with the denial of x;
> (3) For any x, if x is true then x has content; and if x has content then x's truth cannot simply consist in x's being itself a belief, or in x's being something believed or willed or . . . .
> (4) Every true belief (every truth) is true in virtue of something;
> (5) If x_1 is true and x_2 is true, then their conjunction is true. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, pp. 147-148; abbreviation is original)

Among these five marks, let us think about (1), (2), and (3) in detail respectively.

(1) is described in a complicated sentence, but its idea is relatively simple and obvious. The idea is that we actually have a notion of truth and that we assess our beliefs and the sentences expressing the beliefs by relying on the notion of truth. First, Wiggins says, "Suppose truth were not the primary dimensions of assessment for *beliefs*, so that falsehood were not a cardinal defect in them" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 148). Then there would be no reason to suppose that beliefs can be dissociated from

truth. This means that belief that *p* would not carry "any state of sensitivity to the question whether indeed *p*. But we could not interpret this state of mind. For example, if one believes that *p* is true, and, at the same time, he does not care about whether *p* is true, then we do not know what to say about this person's state of mind. Next, Wiggins wants to show that truth is a primary dimension of assessment for sentences. Suppose speakers do not talk about any truth when they make declarative utterances. This means that there is no connection between the utterances and their beliefs, states of mind, or sensibilities. The absence of such a connection is unthinkable, according to Wiggins.

(2) is the thesis that diverse beliefs will converge on truth because people constantly communicate and adjust their beliefs. Wiggins says that there can be two views explaining how convergence is achieved—"from the inside" and "from the outside." First, he explains the view from the inside. Suppose I am convinced of some truth. If no one else agrees with me, I am disturbed. Wiggins says, "[I]f something is so either it must be capable of impinging on others in the way it impinged on me or I shall have in principle to account for its inaccessibility to all others. And if I could have accounted for that, then I should never have been disturbed in the first place by agreement" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 149). That is, knowledge of truth can be explained to others so that it is transferable. And if others do not understand what I know, I may be disturbed. When the knowledge is shared with others, my disturbance will disappear. This way our shared feelings may force us to make an agreement.

Wiggins thinks there is also a view from outside. He says, "Suppose we have a subject predicate sentence 'item *t* is F'" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 150). To understand what is meant by the sentence, we have to know various things such as what *t* or F means. He says, "For a belief to be the belief that item *t* is F the belief has to be both *en rapport* with item *t* and answerable to whether or not the item *t* really has property F" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 150). So, he thinks that such inquiries must be conducive to the movement towards convergence. He says, "So the better we then envisage the conditions of inquiry becoming, the more mysterious it is if no convergence is achieved upon the belief that item *t* is F—if item *t really is* F" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 150). He believes that convergence toward truth is natural if we have a common nature and common interests in the objects.

By (3) Wiggins means that truth is not something just believe or willed. Suppose that *x* is a sentence. In order to find out x's contents or truth value, we have to examine what *x* means or the belief which expresses *x*. And the examination or consideration of what *x* is "will suggest that truth of a sentence cannot ordinarily consist . . . in the bare fact that the judgment it expresses is judged – or that its content is willed" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 151). Simply speaking, when we deal with a proposition with a truth value, we can look into it in an objective manner. If truth were just willed or believed, we cannot treat truth this way.

Wiggins thinks that these conditions of truth can be applied to value judgments. He suggests a special concept of explanation for (moral) truth. It is called vindicatory explanation. He explains this concept as follows:

> What follows from this is that his explanation will conform to the following schema: for this, that and the other reason (here the explainer specifies these),

> there is really nothing else to think but that p; so it is a fact that p; so, given the circumstances and given the subject's cognitive capacities and opportunities and given his access to what leaves nothing else to think but that p, no wonder he believes that p. ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," p. 66)

Wiggins gives an example of the vindicatory explanation: When we calculate 7+5, the answer is 12, and there is nothing else to think but that 7+5=12. Its truth is vindicated by calculation. He believes that moral truth can be explained by the same manner. For example, if "It is wrong to kill an innocent person" is true, there is no doubt in people's mind about the certainty of its truth. So Wiggins wants to show that there are moral truths that can be given a vindicatory explanation. He says,

> So it seems that a key question for moral cognitivism is this: is there a substantial number of moral judgments such that they can command a measure of convergence in belief and such that the best explanation of that convergence in belief is vindicatory? (And not only vindicatory but irreducible. I shall recur to irreducibility at the very end.) The cognitivist is one who answers yes to that question. ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," p. 67)

So far, I have explained Wiggins' (2a), that is, how to establish an idea of moral truth. Now let us move on to his next project, (2b), that is, how to explain moral truth can be secured by vindicatory explanation.

Sensibility and Sensibility Theory

Wiggins and McDowell present sensibility theory as their frame for the explanation of moral truth. The sensibility theory consists of two parts: no-priority view and convergence. Although these two parts are mutually dependent, they are separate concepts. But these two concepts are rarely explicated separately. The sensibility theorists treat their concept of convergence more or less as a part of their no-priority view. But I think this obscures the respective limit and distinctiveness of the two

concepts. I will separate them and consider their no-priority view in this section and discuss their view of convergence later.

Sensibility is a mental activity ascertaining various sensations such as color sensations. Scientifically speaking, colors are not inherent qualities of objects. That is, colors do not exist objectively or externally to our perception. Although the objects contain color pigments, the pigment themselves do not have colors. Nonetheless, it is a fact that we have valid and consistent color experiences that can be shared with other people. Many philosophers and scientists believe that our color experience is due to the exercise of certain human sensibility. Sensibility enables us to ascertain color properties and discern their difference, and provides the standards for our consistent color experiences. John Locke's epistemology is very close to the scientific account. He makes the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. And he holds that the primary qualities belong to the external objects and produce the secondary qualities in our mind. This Lockean account is not accepted by the sensibility theorists. According to Locke, there is unilateral relationship between a property of the object and our color sensation. The sensibility theorists deny such a unilateral relationship. They believe that there is no priority between the color sensation and the color properties. Let us begin with Wiggins' version of the no-priority view.

Wiggins wants to base his no-priority view on Hume's theory of valuation. He says that Hume's official theory is just a subjectivism. When it is said, "x is good or beautiful," this utterance means, according to Hume, that "x is kind of thing to arouse a certain sentiment of approbation" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 187). Wiggins

thinks that this characterization of goodness (or beautifulness) is not very satisfactory. It is not certain whether x is really good for the approbation, or is good just for the speaker. Wiggins says that Hume could have suggested a better formula than this, such as "x is good /right/beautiful if and only if x is such as to make a certain sentiment of approbation *appropriate*" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 187). This new formula gives a better characterization of x than the previous. But this characterization looks circular between goodness/rightness/beautifulness and appropriate approbation. That is, what goodness/rightness/beautifulness is depends on appropriate approbation, and at the same time, appropriate approbation also depends on what goodness/rightness/beautifulness is. Wiggins argues that the circularity is benign and inevitable,

> What after all is a sentiment of approbation? (Or if the point of the words 'certain', sometimes inserted by Hume, is that there are different, phenomenologically distinguishable kinds of approbation, numerous enough to differentiate the good, right, and beautiful, then what *are* sentiments of approbation?) Surely a sentiment of approbation cannot be identified except by its association with the thought or feeling that x is good (or right or beautiful) and with the various considerations in which that thought can be grounded, given some particular item and context, *in situ*. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 187)

He is saying that a sentiment of approbation cannot be explained without a feeling that x is good. Thus the circularity is inevitable.

He argues further that the circularity is all right if the perceived property is unanalyzable or indefinable. For example, our color sensation is not analyzable or definable. Hence the account of appropriate color sensation cannot be made without appealing to proper impression. He says,

> In all these matters, an analogy with colour is suggestive. 'x is red if and only if x is such as to give, under certain conditions specifiable as normal, a certain

> visual impression' naturally raises the question 'which visual impression?' And that question attracts the answer 'an impression as of seeing something red', which reintroduces *red*. But this finding of circularity scarcely amounts to proof that we can after all appeal to something beyond visual impressions to determine colour authoritatively. In only shows that 'red' stands for something not in this sort of way *analyzable*. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 189)

Color sensations are analyzable or indefinable, although "the mere unanalysability or indefinability of color terms does not release us from the task of finding means to elucidate these terms in a way that will bring out their subjectivity" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 189). So we can give the following semantical account of color: A color sensation is right if and only if the sensation is such as to arouse the appropriate sentiment of approbation.

Wiggins agrees with Hume that moral approbation is basically same as color sensation. Although moral approbation shows more variations than color sensation, moral values and color sensations can be explained in the same manner. Wiggins says,

> The first way [of developing the subjectivist's account of value] is to follow Hume's lead and say that, just as in the colour case 'the appearance of objects in daylight to the eye of a man in health is denominated their real and true colour, . . . so value is merely a phantasm of the feelings or a 'gilding or staining' of 'natural objects with the colours borrowed from internal sentiment . . . ; and that to the extent that there is a standard of correctness in morals, this is determined by the verdicts of whoever judges 'most coolly', with the least prejudice', and on the basis of the fullest information – all of which, 'if we consider the matter aright', is 'a question of fact, not of sentiment. When men argue and dispute in valuation, and when they succeed in instructing one another, what they are really seeking to do is to approximate to the verdicts of that judge. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 190)

Wiggins believes that one of the merits in Hume's account is to avoid a common skeptical view denying the truth in moral judgments. That is, by assuming some standard or judge, moral values can be discussed as a matter of fact. Wiggins believes

that Hume's account of color and morality is naturalistic. It is naturalistic not in Moore's sense because Hume does not attempt to reduce morality to something else. Wiggins says, "No analysis or reduction is offered [by Hume] of the content of morality. In the place of reducing moral statements to statements of any other kind, such a subjectivism will offer elucidation" ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," p. 68).

According to Wiggins, there is a problem with Hume's talk of some standard or judge. Although Hume says that there is a good judge with sound organs of perception, Wiggins believes this account is insufficient. Wiggins says, "[I]t leaves us with insufficient grasp, and an insufficient account of our actual grasp . . . of what *constitutes* a good critic or judge" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 192). Moreover, because Hume's account is a doctrine of subjectivism, it cannot appeal to any objective facts or properties. Wiggins points out Hume's predicament as follows: "If Hume holds true to his doctrine that values are merely phantasms of the feelings, or gildings or staining with colours borrowed from internal sentiment, then strictly speaking, he must never look to objects and properties themselves in characterizing the difference between good and bad judgments in taste and morals" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, pp. 192-193). Thus Hume's official theory faces an insoluble problem. This problem is aggravated by another one. In terms of subjectivism, judgments or approbations are just subjective reactions that basically cannot be grouped into good or bad reactions. But after the introduction of the notion of standards, the reactions can be grouped into good or bad ones. Wiggins believes that Hume's initial argument about "gilding and staining" may be no longer effective. Wiggins says,

> We are not simply to fire off at random in our responses to things. A feeble jest or infantile practical joke does not deserve to be grouped with the class of things that a true judge would find genuinely funny. How then in the case of a responsible judge are we to envisage Hume's process of gilding or staining? When the mind of such a judge spreads itself upon objects, does it first determine that x really belongs in the non-natural class of genuine specimens of the funny . . . and then, when all is over bar the shouting, 'gild and stain' x, or 'project' or 'discharge itself' upon x? That seems a ludicrous suggestion. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 193)

If there should be true responses, we may not 'gild or stain' the objects with our feelings. Hume's account of "gilding or staining" objects may not adequately describe how we make true responses, according to Wiggins. Now Wiggins suggests an alternative account to Hume's official theory.

> Is it not rather that there is something in the object that is *made for* the sentiment it would occasion in a qualified judge, and it brings down the sentiment upon the object as so qualified? Surely this feature of x, whatever it is, impinges on perception and sentiment simultaneously; and the time has come to enrich our ideas about what can fall under *each* of perception and sentiment in their engagement with the object. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, pp. 193-194)

Wiggins says that our sentiments may respond to some properties in the objects, and the properties are made for the sentiments. This is his no-priority view, and it is different from Hume's theory. Hume talks only about how are feelings and sentiments are projected into the objects. Hume rejects external properties independent of our projection. In contrast, Wiggins' account needs the existence of external properties which affect our sentiments. However, Wiggins wants to connect his no-priority view with Hume's theory. And he discovers a clue for the connection in Hume's own statement: "It must be allowed that there are certain qualities in objects which are fitted by nature to produce particular . . . feelings" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 194). Here Hume admits that there are certain qualities in the external

objects, which can arouse particular feelings in the mind. Although it is not certain how this suggestion can be positioned in Hume's official theory, Wiggins anticipates that this unofficial suggestion may resolve the predicament Hume's official theory faces. That is, it may provide the basic ideas for the establishment of the no-priority view. Wiggins thinks his no-priority view can be based on Hume's theory in the following way:

> It will see these sentiments and the intersubjectively discernible features of the world with which they engage as related in this way: as the sentiments arise, these features are discerned or singled out; and as the features are discerned or singled out, the sentiments become possible. ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," p. 69)

There is no priority between sentiments and objective features corresponding to the sentiments. Wiggins further says that evaluative experiences come to us in the shape of <property, response> pair (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 196). This is his important idea of pairing. He emphasizes that the properties tied to feelings or sensibilities are not natural properties, but "anthropocentric properties" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 196). That is, there can be temporally the cases in which some kind of feelings—e.g., comic—do not get tied to certain properties. For example, it is possible that some people do not understand why many others are laughing at David Letterman's comic jokes. But by communication or understanding of others, they may come to realize that the comedian's jokes are funny. Wiggins explains this process of attaining properties as follows:

> By means of them, one person can improve another's grasp of the concept of the funny; and one person can improve another's focus or discrimination of what *is* funny. Furthermore, the process can be a collaborative one, without either of the participants to a dialogue counting as the absolutely better judge. The test of improvement in this process of mutual instruction and improvement can be at least partially internal to the perceptions of its

> participants. . . . . Finer perceptions can both intensify and refine responses. Intenser responses can further heighten and refine perceptions. And more and more refined responses can lead to the further and finer and more variegated or more intense responses and perceptions. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 196)

We can improve and refine our responses by communication and conversation. This way we can attain comic properties. Because the properties are discovered by the process of response and refinement, they are not natural properties, according to Wiggins.

Because the no-priority view rejects the priority of either external property or internal sentiments, it conflicts with the Lockean view that there is an insurmountable gap between primary and secondary properties. Wiggins says,

> It is either false or senseless to deny that what valuational predicates stand for are properties in a world. It is neither here nor there that these value properties are not primary qualities, provided that they be objectively discriminable and can impinge upon practical appreciation and judgment. No extant argument shows that they cannot. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 131)

He rejects the standard view that "no value predicate stands for any real primary quality, and that the real properties of the world, the properties which inhere in the world however it is viewed, are the primary qualities" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 121).

Similarly, McDowell rejects the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. He says that properties and sensibilities are inseparable and that there is no empirical ground for the distinction between two kinds of property. He argues against the claim that color sensation is just a secondary quality,

> Secondary-quality experience presents itself as perceptual awareness of properties genuinely possessed by the objects that confront one. And there is no general obstacle to taking that appearance at face value. An object's being such as to look red is independent of its actually looking red to anyone on any particular occasion; so, notwithstanding the conceptual connection between being red and being experienced as red, an experience of something as red can count as a case of being presented with a property that is there anyway – there

> independently of the experience itself. And there is no evident ground for accusing the appearance of being misleading. What would one expect it to be like to experience something's being such as to look red, if not to experience the thing in question (in the right circumstances) as looking, precisely, red? ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 134)

McDowell also says that colors are the "properties genuinely possessed by the objects." The colors of objects are independent of how we perceive them. If color properties are secondary qualities, they are subjective properties. And if they are subjective properties, we cannot talk about them objectively. But this conclusion is obviously false because we can talk about the colors objectively. Our perception does not control their existence, although their existence is inseparable from our perception. The redness of a red object is not fully explained by our subjective sensation because the color property (redness) belongs to the object.

McDowell further argues that the Lockean notion of objectivity and subjectivity do not fully explain our experience. According to the Lockean model, primary qualities are objective while secondary qualities are mental or subjective. This distinction between objectivity and subjectivity is in conflict with a popular distinction of objectivity from subjectivity. McDowell says,

> Now this [Lockean distinction] contrast between objective and subjective is not a contrast between veridical and illusory experience. But it is easily confused with a different contrast in which to call a putative object of awareness "objective" is to say that it is there to be experienced, as opposed to being a mere figment of the subjective state that purports to be an experience of it. If secondary qualities were subjective in the sense that naturally contrasts with this, naïve consciousness would indeed be wrong about them, and we would need something like Mackie's Lockean picture of the error it commits. What is acceptable though, is only that secondary qualities are subjective in the first sense, and it would be simply wrong to suppose that this gives any support to the idea that there are subjective in the second. ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 136)

According to McDowell, the Lockean sense of objectivity does not explain a commonsense notion of objectivity, which means "It is there to be experienced." Secondary qualities such as color properties are there to be experienced, but Lockean distinction holds that the qualities are subjective. Similarly, Locke's distinction does not explain the common notion of subjectivity, which means "illusory." McDowell further says that Mackie's error theory is based on the Lockean model of perception. The distinction cannot explain our value perceptions. Our value perceptions are objective according to the commonsense, but the Lockean distinction regards the value perceptions as subjective. For this reason, Mackie thinks that our commonsense belief in objective moral values is erroneous, according to McDowell.

According to McDowell, a crucial feature of the Lockean distinction is the notion of resemblance. That is, it is believed that our perception of primary qualities resembles the primary qualities of external objects. That is, our perception is caused by the external primary qualities. But the notion of resemblance is actually constructed from our experience, according to McDowell. He says, "[W]e command a concept of resemblance that would enable us to construct notions of possible primary qualities out of the idea of resemblance to such neutral elements of experience" ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 135). We have a notion of resemblance by comparing many objects looking similar to each other. McDowell seems to think Locke extends the idea of resemblance between objects to the imaginary resemblance between experiential objects and their primary qualities. He says the notion of resemblance is incomprehensible and mysterious ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 135). That is, it is mysterious to believe that there are

independent primary qualities which cause us to have the perception of them. McDowell says,

> If one wants, within this framework, to preserve Locke's intuition that primary-quality experience is distinctive in potentially disclosing the objective properties of things, one will be naturally led to Locke's use of the notion of resemblance. But no notion of resemblance could get us from an essentially experiential state of affairs to the concept of a feature of objects intelligible otherwise than in terms of how its possessors would strike us. ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 138)

McDowell is saying that we cannot certify that our perception of primary qualities really resembles the primary qualities independent of us. We cannot perceive the primary qualities as they are because they lie beyond our perception. Simply speaking, we cannot know by experience whether our perception of primary qualities accurately represent the external primary qualities. Hence, we have no reliable method to distinguish primary qualities from secondary qualities. We just experience objectively the qualities that belong to the objects. And we can tell that some qualities fabricated by our mind are bogus. So, the notion of resemblance supporting the distinction of the primary qualities from the secondary ones is not warranted. He is repeating Berkeley's criticism of Locke.

If the notion of resemblance is eliminated, the separation of primary qualities from secondary qualities is no longer viable. He says,

> If one gives up the Lockean use of resemblance, but retains the idea that primary and secondary qualities are experientially on a par, one will be led to suppose that the properties attributed to objects in the "manifest image' are all equally phenomenal – intelligible, that is, only in terms of how their possessors are disposed to appear. Properties that are objective, in the contrasting sense, can then figure only in the "scientific image." On these lines one altogether loses hold of Locke's intuition that primary qualities are distinctive in being both and perceptible. ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 138)

It is worth noticing that McDowell says that all qualities are equally phenomenal. So, one may say that McDowell argues for phenomenalism which holds that all physical properties are reducible to sensory experience. But I think his view is not phenomenalism because he wants to explain how external objects should be understood, not that the objects are nothing but mental. But if all we can rely on is just sensory experience, how can the externality of properties be maintained? McDowell answers this question by saying that there is no priority between external properties and internal sensibilities of them. Thus he wants to avoid subjectivism and phenomenalism. He says that his view is "better described as 'anti-anti-realism' than as 'realism'" (*Mind, Value, and Reality*, p. viii).

McDowell explains his no-priority view as follows:

> Denying that the extra features are prior to the relevant sentiments, such a view distances itself from the idea that these belong, mysteriously, in a reality that is wholly independent of our subjectivity and set over against it. It does not follow that the sentiments have a priority. If there is no comprehending the right sentiments independently of the concepts of the relevant extra features; a no-priority view is surely indicated. ("Projection and Truth in Ethics," pp. 159-160)

Like Wiggins, McDowell applies the no-priority view to various human experiences—sensations and feelings like fear and danger, disgust, humor, color sensation, and other evaluative experiences like aesthetic or moral activities. For example, humor is a sensation tied heavily to sensibility. There is no humorous property embedded in objects independently of our sensibility. Although we may feel funny for some situations or activities, they do not contain the properties independent of our sensation of humor. It is our sensibility, according to McDowell, that captures humorous properties by which we think the actions are funny. Our color sensation

can be explained by the same method. When we project our color sensations, we also receive color properties simultaneously. For the same reason, moral properties do not exist independently of our sensibility. Our moral sensibilities and moral properties are tied together.

McDowell also calls his view "phenomenology of value" because he describes objective value properties in terms of experience as it is, not in terms of a theoretical frame which is not proven by experience, such as Locke's primary qualities. He says,

> The point is . . . that if we can disconnect the notion of the world (or its fabric or furniture) from that notion of objectivity, then we make it possible to consider different interpretations of the claim that value is part of the world, a claim which the phenomenology of value experience has made attractive to philosophers and ordinary people. ("Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World," p. 129)

Wiggins completely agrees with McDowell on the phenomenological account of value,

> The phenomenological account I advocate would accommodate all these things in conjunction with (1) ordinary anthropocentric objectivity, (2) the elements of Value-focus and discovery, and (3) the element of invention that it is the non-cognitivist's distinction to have imported into the argument. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 137)

Exemplary Cases of the No-priority View

Our color perception is a typical case demonstrating the sensibility theorists' phenomenological claim or their no-priority view. Since we have the perception without willing, we cannot recognize any priority between color sensations and color properties. Sometimes we have a wrong color perception, so we have to reassess our sensation. But even this case does not defy the no-priority view. For example, I think an object is blue, which is actually green. If I perceive it as blue, I must have the pair

of <blue color property, sensibility of the blue color>. When I have a correct perception, the pair is <green color property, sensibility of the green color>. Whether we have the right or the wrong color perception, the inseparability of property and sensibility is fully maintained.

When it comes to evaluative perceptions, the inseparability thesis becomes questionable. For example, suppose a person is really fearful of poisonous snakes. One day, he and his friend took a walk through a forest. A snake with multiple colors in a dazzling pattern suddenly came out of the bushes. This person thought it might be poisonous and flinched back. But his friend said to him, "I don't think the snake is poisonous. I heard that a species of snake imitates by evolution the color and pattern of some poisonous snakes. This one doesn't look like a poisonous one." So, the person was frightened by the snake regardless of whether it is really poisonous or not. I think the person's fear can be explained better by projection than the no-priority view. It does not make much sense to say that there is an objective property of fear in the snake. If the person is fearful of the snake even without knowing whether it is really poisonous, I think it is reasonable to say that he projects his fear on the snake.

Let us now consider the no-priority view for the comic cases, the properties of being funny, which has been a favorite topic for the sensibility theorists. They say that that these properties are not natural properties. But Henry Bergson gives a naturalistic account of being funny or comedy. He says that an important element of comedy is what he calls "mechanical inelasticity" (*Comedy*, p. 67). He gives an example,

> A man, running along the street, stumbles and falls; the passers-by burst out laughing. They would not laugh at him, I imagine, could they suppose that the

> whim had suddenly seized him to sit down on the ground. They laugh because his sitting down is involuntary. Consequently, it is not his sudden change of attitude that raises a laugh, but rather the involuntary element in this change,—his clumsiness, in fact. Perhaps there were a stone on the road. He should have altered his pace or avoided the obstacle. Instead of that, through lack of elasticity, through absentmindedness and a kind of physical obstinacy, *as a result, in fact, of rigidity or of momentum*, the muscles continued to perform the same movement when the circumstances of the case called for something else. That is the reason of the men's fall, and also of the people's laughter. (*Comics*, p. 66)

Although the passers-by say that the man's action is funny, there is no comic property in his falling down. Inelasticity in his action is not a funny property. This is a typical case of naturalistic account of value experience that value properties supervene upon natural properties. Although there can be objective properties, it is possible that they are natural properties.

The no-priority view may not hold for our moral sentiments. That is, it is possible that our moral sentiments are not necessarily connected to some properties. The <property, sensibility> pair may not be supported. Hare talks about this case in which sensibility does accompany with properties. He says,

> If a parson says of a girl that she is a good girl, we can form a shrewd idea, of what description she is; we may expect her to go to church, for example. It is therefore easy to fall into the error of supposing that by calling her a good girl the parson means simply that she has these descriptive characteristics. (*The Language of Morals*, p. 146)

Hare's point is that the description of her good characters or good qualities in her behavior does not explain thoroughly why the parson says that she is a good girl. This is because the parson's evaluation of her is to commend her, not to describe her good qualities or characters. Hare continues,

> It is quite true that part of what the parson means is that the girl has these characteristics; but it is to be hoped that this is not all he means. He also means to commend her for having them; and this part of his meaning is

> primary. The reason why we know, when a parson says a girl is good, what sort of girl she is, how she normally behaves, &c., is that parson are usually consistent in the way they award commendation. It is through being used consistently by parsons for commending certain sorts of behavior in girls that the world comes to have a descriptive force. (*The Language of Morals*, p. 146)

That is to say, the parson is commending her as a person, not her properties. For Hare, the word "good" has an evaluative meaning, but no descriptive meaning. Hence it cannot describe a property. If our moral words only express our sentiments and never describe moral properties, they cannot be as a pair. The no-priority thesis is incompatible with prescriptivism and emotivism. In my view, it is chiefly addressed to projectivists such as Hume and Blackburn.

Let us compare the no-priority theory with projectivism in terms of causation. When I see a beautiful landscape, the projectivist would say that I project my beautiful feelings to the landscape. My feeling is the cause that creates the beautiful property of the landscape as its effect. My attitude or feelings is prior to the beautiful property of the landscape. This is the priority of an attitude or feeling. On the other hand, the realist would say that the beautiful property of the landscape is the cause that produces my feeling as its effect. This is the priority of the property. The sensibility theorists want to avoid these two priority views. For them, the relation between feelings or attitudes and properties is not causal. Neither of them is prior to the other. They are dependent on each other. They are made for each other, according to the sensibility theorists. They are inseparable, for example, the feeling of funny is inseparable from the property of amusing, just as the sensation of yellow is inseparable from the color yellow. Likewise, moral feelings are inseparable from moral properties.

There is no causal priority not only because they depend on each other, but also because they take place simultaneously. It is wrong to say that properties are created by sensibilities because that would attribute some causal power to sensibilities. It is equally wrong to say that properties are discovered by sensibilities because that would imply the independent existence of properties. If they do not exist independently, they cannot be discovered. But Wiggins has difficulty in staying away from the language of "creation" and "discovery." He says,

> [O]nce that content is given and the sense of some moral question is determinate, it is not human nature and responses that determine the reference or truth-value of the putative answers to it. You can say, if you like, that we create a form of life that invests certain features of people, acts and situations with the status of values. (Surely that is not false.) But this is not to say that *values* are created thereby. Rather values are discovered by those who live the form of life that is said to have been created. ("Moral Cognitivism, Relativism and Beliefs," p. 79)

He says that values are not created, but discovered. This statement is incompatible with the no-priority view because it implies that there are values not detected by our sensibility. He can save this view only by saying that values are discovered together with the sense of values.

Wiggins presents his no-priority view as a theory of individual sensibility especially in his theory of color sensations. But when he talks about value sensations, he often treats them as collective phenomena involving a community of individuals, which develops over a long period of time. He says,

> Suppose that objects that regularly please or help or amuse us . . . or harm or annoy or vex us . . . in various ways come to be grouped together by us under various categories or classifications to which we give various avowedly anthropocentric names; and suppose they come to be grouped together as they are precisely because they are such as to please, help, amuse us, . . . or harm, annoy, vex us . . . in their various ways. There will be then no saying, very often, what properties these names stand for independently of the reactions

> they provoke. . . . But equally—at least when the system of properties and reactions diversifies, complicates and enriches itself—there will often be no saying exactly *what* reaction a thing with the associated property will provoke without direct or indirect allusion to the property itself. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 195)

At first, many instances are not to be explained by the no-priority view. But as civilization is goes on, people come to have common way of life and common way of responding to objects. There must be various things that harm, annoy, or vex people repeatedly. These things are grouped together, and given names. Then, a time comes when people's reaction and the properties in objects are inseparable. Wiggins gives an example as follows:

> Amusement for instance is a reaction we have to characterize by reference to its proper object, via something perceived as funny (or incongruous or comical or whatever.) There is no object-independent and property-independent, 'purely phenomenological' or 'purely introspective' account of amusement. And equally there is no saying what exactly the funny is without reference to laughter or amusement or kindred reactions. Why should we expect there to be such an independent account? (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 195)

For example, when the clown was first invented, people might not think it was very funny. But after watching clowns many times, people came to find them funny. Then the feeling of amusement was linked to the funny property in the clown, as the no-priority view holds. Wiggins also says that an account that separates the reaction from the property is impossible.

There are two models for the sensibility theory: the individual and the collective model. The problem of consistency is important for avoiding relativism. Let us assume that there is no priority between my moral feeling and its corresponding property. For example, I feel that my girl friend is beautiful. In that case, my feeling is paired with her property of being beautiful. But unfortunately my

feeling is not stable. A few days I feel that she is not beautiful at all. Then she no longer has the property of being beautiful. But she tells that she has not changed at all. The same sort of instability can take place with my moral feelings. One day I feel that there is nothing wrong with abortion. In that case, abortion has the moral property of not being wrong. But the next day I feel that it is terribly wrong. On that day, abortion has the moral property of being terribly wrong. In either case, I will concede, there is no priority between moral feelings and moral properties. The no-priority thesis may be true, but it does not guarantee the consistency of my feelings. The inconsistency of my moral feelings and attitudes means relativism. In this case, relativism is taking place within one individual. This is an important problem because the ultimate aim of sensibility theorists is to find solid ground for moral objectivity and avoid the pitfall of relativism.

Let us now consider the collective problem for sensibility theory. When the problem of inconsistency may range over different individuals, it is called divergence. When I say that my girl friend is beautiful, my roommate says that she is ugly. In that case, she has two properties. She has the property of being beautiful to be paired with my feeling and the property of being ugly to be paired with my roommate's feeling. I can concede that the two cases of pairing do not violate the no-priority thesis. We can easily recognize the divergence of moral attitudes about abortion between me and my roommate. This divergence is relativism over different individuals. Even if each of them maintains a consistent attitude for the moral issue, they can still differ from each other. The no-priority thesis can do nothing to avoid their divergence. This thesis has nothing to do with how my pair of <property, response> is related to your pair of

<property, response>. These two pairs may have nothing to do with each other. Their mutual independence guarantees relativism. My pair of <property, response> is true for me; your pair of <property, response> is true for you. I believe that Wiggins considers the historical development of sensibility primarily to cope with this sort of relativism between different individuals. His hope is that the sensibilities of different individuals will converge as they develop collectively in a community over a long period of time. This is his theory convergence.

Convergence

The no-priority thesis guarantees the truth value of moral judgments. They are true or false by virtue of the moral properties that are inseparable from the corresponding moral feelings. Hence the sensibility theory belongs to the camp of cognitivism. Among other things, the sensibility theorists are opposed to relativism. They want to safeguard the truth value of moral judgments. But the truth value of moral judgments may be relative to each individual if the different individuals do not share the same moral sensibility. Then moral judgments may not be objective even if they have relative truth values. What is true for one individual may be false for another individual. This form of relativism cannot be overcome by the no-priority thesis because this thesis has nothing to do with the moral agreement between different individuals. For this reason, the divergence of different individuals is the biggest challenge for the sensibility theorists. If the sensibility theory cannot demonstrate how subjective judgments can be objectively evaluated, its claim of cognitivism would become empty. The notion of convergence is proposed to take care of this

problem. That is, diverse judgments, reactions, or opinions can converge on a true value, which can serve as the objective standard of evaluation.

Wiggins says that his theory is a "moral cognitivism in its weakest recognizable form, which [is sometimes called] underdeterminationism" (*Needs, Values, Truth,* p.141). "Underdeterminationism" means that there can be multiple true moral claims and judgments on one moral issue. We can never say that only one judgment or claim is true on any moral issue. In other words, there can be multiple <property, response> pairs on one issue. McDowell completely agrees with Wiggins's idea on multiple pairing. Their theory of multiple pairing accounts for the fact one society has different moral values from others. Each society has its own value system which serves as the ground of its moral judgments. They also believe that there is no universal sense of rationality that can resolve moral problems everywhere. This is dictated by Wiggins' underdeterminationism. So he says,

> If so, and if, where practical reason idles, it is pointless to look to it for a practical verdict, then—in so far as we persist in attributing to the disputants a common understanding of what is meant by the question of what one ought to do about this or that—well, indeterminacy or underdetermination is revealed in the reference and extension of certain moral words (understood in this way) or in certain combinations of them (so understood.) ("Moral cognitivism, Relativism, and Belief," p. 77)

Here Wiggins is saying that underdetermination is contained in our moral words because they are indeterminate. If our moral concepts are indeterminate, they are bound to breed divergences rather than convergences. But the problem of divergence can be overcome only by convergence, according to Wiggins. But he says that the range of convergence is highly limited,

> The expectation of convergence can be legitimately confined to people of a certain culture who have what it takes to understand a certain sort of

> judgment— provided of course that one is prepared in principle to undertake to spell out what their special sensibility is, and to submit to any test there may be the claim that *there is* something that they are thus sensitive to. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 160)

Convergence is possible only among those who share a certain culture and can communicate their sensibilities with each other. It appears that convergence is a cultural product, that is, the force of a given culture fosters convergence within its community. Let us call it cultural convergence in distinction from natural convergence. A good example of natural convergence is our color perceptions. Most people tend to have the same color perceptions not by cultural inculcation but by their genetic endowments. On the other hand, the use of color words is not governed by natural convergence. If there is any convergence in the use of color words, it is produced by cultural convergence. The distinction between natural and cultural convergence is important for understanding Wiggins' and McDowell's theory of convergence.

Because of his underdeterminism that allows a considerable range of divergence in sensibilities, Wiggins says that his cognitivism is not as strong as the strong cognitivism. Thus he recognizes two versions of cognitivism,

> Before going any further, a note on terminology. By moral cognitivism I shall mean here the doctrine that, where a moral judgment is found to be worthy of being affirmed, (a) the judgment is a candidate to be known and a candidate for plain truth, and (b) the judgment stands or falls for acceptance according as it attains to that status. Unrestricted or strong moral cognitivism will replace the where in this formulation by an emphatic wherever; and will want no qualification or restriction of either (a) or (b). (*Needs, Values, Truth*, pp. 140-141)

The idea of convergence is not a unique idea of the sensibility theories. Many other theories share the similar idea. We saw that Mackie expected that community

standards can be agreed. This agreement is a convergence. Blackburn also says that moral agreements can be reached by discussion and the improvement of individual sentiments. That is his version of convergence. In fact, the sensibility theorists' convergence is not much different from these two prior versions. According to Wiggins, there are two kinds of view on convergence. One is the sensibility theorists' view allowing underdetermination. The other is Peirce's theory of convergence. Wiggins characterizes the Peircean convergence as a scientific concept of convergence,

> Suppose we take a Peircean view of Science as discovering that which is destined, the world being what it is, to be ultimately agreed by all who investigate. Let 'all' mean 'all actual or possible intelligent beings competent, whatever their conceptual scheme, to look for the fundamental explanatory principles of the world'. Then think of all these theories gradually converging through isomorphism towards identity. Cosmic rationality in belief will then consist in conforming one's beliefs so far as possible to the truths that are destined to survive in this process of convergence. (*Needs, Values, Truth,* p. 120)

According to Peirce, truth is discovered by the convergence of scientific investigation. However, Wiggins believes that there is a problem in the Peircean model of convergence. It deals only with primary qualities because these qualities are objective or external. Because secondary qualities are subjective or internal, they cannot be included in the Peircean model. Wiggins points out this limitation of the Peircean model:

> This Peircean conceptual scheme articulates nothing that it is humanly possible to care about. It does not even have the expressive resources to pick out the extensions of predicates like 'red', 'chair', 'person', 'famine'. . . . For none of these has a strong claim to be factual by the scientific criterion. (*Needs, Values, Truth,* p.121)

If the Peircean convergence is applied to value judgments, it will support strong cognitivism. The Peircean model of convergence would dictate that the same moral truths should obtain in all societies. Wiggins thinks that this is impossible. He can see no possibility or prospect that all rational beings can agree on all moral issues. Again, he says that convergence can be obtained only among the people sharing a certain culture and capabilities of communication. Hence, the Perceian convergence is applicable to scientific research, but not to moral or other value issues.

The notion of convergence presupposes that (moral) truth is discovered inductively. However, many people believe that moral truth is not discovered by convergence or induction. For example, Kant says that moral truth is attained by a priori reason. Wiggins naturally objects to Kant's notion of practical reason. He explains Kant's project as follows:

> Kant's formal theory of practical reason in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* supplies precisely the materials that are required to support a closer parallelism between arithmetic and ethics. The judgments 'He must X' will be true just if, in X-ing, the agent would be acting in accordance with a subjective maxim that he could at the same time will become through his will a universal law for all rational beings, and the attempt to will the negation of the maxim results either in a 'contradiction in conception' or a 'contradiction in willing' [424]. Since this 'could' is not supposed to be psychological or contaminated in any way with the egoism or special pursuits or preferences of anybody in particular . . . the claim may then be advanced that the content of judgments of this type will be testable by an *a priori* procedure. The said content will render the judgments that pass the test suitable to command just the kind of convergence that arithmetical propositions command among rational men. Wherever a moral judgment or verdict upon an agent's conduct commands actual consensus, we ought to be prepared to discover that the best explanation of the consensus is that there is nothing else that could have been willed as a law for the rational will. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 154)

Kant attempts to demonstrate formally that our practical reason prescribe the universal moral laws. Wiggins thinks that Kant's procedure is analogous to

mathematical demonstration. Both are rational and yield determinate results. Wiggins thinks that Kant's a priori procedure can be likened to a procedure of convergence, because all rational beings must agree on the same moral laws. Of course, there is a fundamental difference between Kant's a priori procedure and Wiggins's convergence. But Wiggins thinks that Kant's project can hardly demonstrates the certainty and determinacy of moral convergence. Even if the moral agents think and act by a priori reasoning to construct the formula of universal laws, they may still choose different moral (or immoral) rules. Wiggins says,

> This [i.e., Kant's theory of practical reason] may seem like a tempting prospect. But unluckily it is as yet no more than a bare possibility, for reasons that Kant himself sometimes confronted. ('Maxims of actions might be arbitrary, and are only subject to the restricting condition of fitness for a universal lawgiving, which is a formal principle of actions.') We have no guarantee that, for every practical predicament, there is one and only one relevant maxim that could be willed as a universal law for rational being in that predicament. Until more is said, we have no assurance that divergent or even conflicting maxims will not compete to answer the question 'What must I do?' (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 154)

Wiggins claims that Kant's a priori reasoning cannot secure the convergence of moral rules. But the Kantian convergence is different from Wiggins'. The former is rigid; the latter is flexible. The former allows no divergence whatsoever; the latter allows some divergence. Wiggins' criticism of Kant is correct. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant tries to demonstrate that universal moral rules can be established by a priori reasoning. This a priori method is called the method of universalization, which is extensively discussed by Mackie in his *Ethics*. For the demonstration of his method of universalization, Kant uses the famous four cases of suicide, lying, developing one's talent, and helping others in need. For the first two cases, he claims that the relevant moral rules can be established by the logical

principle of self-contradiction alone. But many critics have pointed out that the logical principle of self-consistency alone cannot validate those moral rules. For the last two cases, Kant admits that the right moral rules cannot be chosen by the principle of self-contradiction alone, but claims that they can be chosen by the rational will. But his critics have shown that the rational will can choose either of the two competing maxims, namely, the maxim of developing one's talent and the maxim of not developing one's talent, and the maxim of helping others in need and the maxim of not doing so. Kant has never succeeded that the choice of moral rules can be as rigid and as determinate as he claims.

Kant's method of universalization has been used by many other people. The utilitarians have used it, and Hare has used it in his presciptivism. Wiggins thinks that universalization or universalizability, whatever its concrete idea is, cannot solve the problem of divergent moral views. He says that the notion may work in a very limited way, that is, when there is already a consensus in the community. But the method of universalization can never generate moral principles and rules. Wiggins says,

> Universalization is no longer a method or any part of a method for the initial generation of moral ideas and principles. It works on what is already fully moralized and in no way merely prima facie. At best, it is a method of reminder and adjustment already implicit in what it is deployed upon. And it comes without any stated guarantee of producing a full consilience of moral ideas or principles (either intrapersonally or interpersonally). What is more, this species of universalization does not even aim to transcend the character of its intuitive starting point. (Needs, Values, Truth, pp. 78-79)

Kant's rigid convergence leads to strong cognitivism. But Wiggins believes that his position is implausible. So he feels that his position of underdetermination and flexible convergence is the feasible alternative. But this alternative leads to

relativism. We have already noted the relativity of moral sensibilities. But Wiggins emphasizes that the underdetermination is not a drawback of the theory. He says,

> What this relativity imports is the possibility that there may be simply no point in urging that a stranger to our associations owes the object this response. Even if a stranger can, by an imaginative effort, get himself some idea of what the property φ is and what the associated reaction A is, this may not suffice to effect the connexion between his discerning φ in a thing and his participating fully in A. It may not result in his identifying or associating himself with that sort of response. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 203)

Wiggins says further that this kind of relativity is normal in moral thinking and in the development of moral values.

> A relativity of this kind was always to have been expected if it is by the process speculatively reconstructed in [Section 8 and 9; i.e., the development and convergence of the paring] above that we get our value terms. For this process was a historical and particular one, and it comprised some contribution by the mind unlike that which is postulated in Kantian epistemology. What imports the relativity is a contribution that need not be everywhere the same or similar in its content. There is the possibility (at least) of distinct and different moral and aesthetic worlds whose inhabitants need to struggle long and hard to appreciate the differences. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 203)

Wiggins considers possible criticisms from the rivals. First, both intuitionist objectivists and Humean skeptics such as emotivists may protest as follows:

> [Y]ou [i.e., Wiggins] are trying to ground a distinction that you like to describe as the distinction between what is really φ and not really φ upon what are by your own account mere responses—upon a convergence in the inclinations various people feel or do not feel to say that *x* is φ or that *x* is not φ. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 204)

The objection is that the attainment of truth by his method of convergence is impossible, because his notion of truth is based on the consensus of mere responses, which are none other than some people's inclinations and feelings. The eclectic agreement of such subjective responses cannot be the discovery of true values. In response to this objection, Wiggins says that the critiques do not correctly understand

what he means by convergence. It is an agreement of not mere responses, but correct responses.

> Pending a more challenging statement of the objection, however, I believe that I can defend the subjectivist position as we now have it by pointing out that these responses we have been speaking of are not 'mere' responses. They are responses that are correct when and only when they are occasioned by what has the corresponding property φ and are occasioned by it because it is φ. If the objector persists: 'How can human agreement in these responses decide what really is φ or not φ?' I reply that the sort of agreement that is in question here is only in agreement in *susceptibility* to respond thus and so to φ things. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, pp. 204-205)

Wiggins' argument can be rephrased as follows: Among various responses there are the correct responses, and the convergence is the procedure that people recognize and accept the correct ones. It is obvious that the convergence of correct responses can produce truth and that the convergence of incorrect responses can produce falsehood. In that case, convergence has nothing to do with truth because it can produce falsehood as well as truth. But if we know what the correct responses are, there is no need to have their convergence before talking about their truth. Correct responses must be true by definition. It is inconceivable to have correct responses that are false. But how can we tell the correct responses from the incorrect ones? Wiggins says, "They are responses that are correct when and only when they are occasioned by what has the corresponding property φ and are occasioned by it because it is φ." He is assuming that the responses are occasioned by the property. This is to concede the independent existence of the property apart from the response. But this goes against his no-priority thesis. When Wiggins introduced the <property, response> pair, he stressed the mutual dependence of property and response, that is, there is no priority between them. If they are truly dependent on each other, one

cannot occasion the other. There is no point in talking about the correctness or incorrectness of a response to the corresponding property. The <property, response> pair is one-to-one relation. Only on the model of one property to many different responses, we can meaningfully talk about the correctness and incorrectness of the responses.

To talk about the correctness and incorrectness of responses also goes against his convergence model. He has adopted this model because there is no way to tell the difference between correct and incorrect responses. That is the same reason for Peirce's adoption of convergence for the theory of scientific truths. There is no way to tell which of the competing scientific theories is true until the scientists finally converge on one theory. Wiggins endorsed this point, that is, convergence is the method of reaching the truth. He has to say that moral responses are correct and true if and only if they converge. He has no way of knowing which responses are correct and which are incorrect prior to convergence. He says that the convergence is not the agreement in opinions or beliefs:

> It is agreement at most . . . in what property/response associations we are able to catch onto and work up into a shared way of talking, acting, and reacting. Since this agreement is not in itself agreement in *opinions* about what is φ or not φ (even though the existence of the shared language presupposes the possibility of such agreement), there is no question of the agreement in the belief that x is φ being the *criterion* for x's really being φ. x is only really φ if it is such as to evoke and make appropriate the response A among those who are sensitive to φ-ness. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 205)

Wiggins is now introducing the notion of appropriateness. The judgment can be an appropriate or inappropriate. The appropriate response must be correct; the inappropriate response must be incorrect. This can be taken as the distinction between the correct and the incorrect responses. That is what Wiggins seems to think.

But how can we tell the difference between the appropriate and the inappropriate responses? This is distinction is not any easier to make than the distinction between the correct and the incorrect responses.

So far we have considered the diversity of sensibilities as an obstacle to Wiggins' convergence. He considers another obstacle. An objector may ask, "[W]hat if these susceptibilities changed? Could that make what is now right wrong, what is now good bad?" (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 205) Wiggins responds that the change of susceptibility would not happen, because our susceptibility is tied to objective properties. He says,

> The objection would be dead right if the subjectivist were saying that 'x is good' may be paraphrased as 'x is such as to arouse or make appropriate [a certain] sentiment of approbation', and if he were saying that this paraphrase could then be intersubstituted with 'good'. . . . But the subjectivist need not be saying that. His distinctive claim is that x is good if and only if x is the sort of thing that calls forth or makes appropriate a certain sentiment of approbation *given the range of propensities that we actually have to respond in this or that way*; or generalizing a little, and still disclaiming the attempt to provide an equivalent, his claim is that, for each value predicate φ . . . , there is an attitude or response of subjects belonging to a range of propensities that we actually have such that an object has the property φ stands for if and only if the object is fitted by its characteristics to bring down that extant attitude or response upon it and bring it down precisely because it has those characteristics. (*Needs, Values, Truth*, p. 206)

Wiggins is again appealing to his idea of appropriateness. By weeding out all inappropriate responses, he can secure the convergence of appropriate responses for any given individual even if his or her sensibility changes. This is the same method he used for coping with the diversity of sensibility among different individuals. But what is the criterion of appropriateness? It is the property φ. The appropriateness or inappropriateness of a response can be determined in reference to the property. This assertion again presupposes the existence of the property prior to the response, which

violates the no-priority thesis. In the quoted passage, Wiggins is also advocating the cultural theory of convergence. Once the appropriate responses are established, the new members of a community have to adapt their sensibilities to the objective pairs of <property, sensibility>. This is to put the cart before the horse. Wiggins is supposed to explain how true pairs of <property, sensibility> can be established by convergence. But he is explaining how convergence can be achieved by establishing the true <property, sensibility> pair. Thus Wiggins' theory of convergence gets nowhere. In this discussion, I have said not very much about McDowell largely because his views on the no-priority thesis and convergence are substantially the same as Wiggins's. McDowell briefly talks about convergence in his criticism of Blackburn's projectivism. He says that sensibility theory can attain evaluative truth by utilizing actual or factual concepts that are not available to Blackburn,

> The interest of the no-priority view, now, is that it opens up the possibility that it might be respectable to *use* the apparently world-describing conceptual resources with which we articulate our responses, in earning truth in one of the relevant areas. Blackburn's simpler structure of options suggests that we must deny ourselves those resources, on pain of lapsing back into a bald intuitionism. A serious projective quasi-realism about the comic would construct a conception of what it is for things to be really funny on the basis of principles for ranking senses of humour which would have to be established from outside the propensity to find things funny. The contrasting idea [i.e., sensibility theory] would be that we might regard our conception of greater and less refinement and discrimination in senses of humour as derivative from an understanding of what it is for things to be really funny: something we can acceptably aim to elaborate from within the propensity to find things funny. ("Projection and Truth in Ethics," pp. 160-161)

McDowell is saying that the no-priority view can provide richer conceptual resources than Blackburn's projectivism. Faced with a comical situation like the comedian Jay Leno's joke about Clinton-Lewinsky affair, the projectivist can only say that he is projecting his sense of humor to the affair. He cannot say that the situation is really

funny. Thus he impoverishes his language and his conceptual resources. But the sensibility theorists have the resources to say that the situation is really funny. This is his world-describing resources.

McDowell's world-describing resources may include the <property, sensitivity> pairs, which provide the properties of being funny, sad, or terrible. He claims that the sensibility theory alone can avoid the two extremes of intuitionism and projectivism:

> Analogously in the ethical case; here again the possibility of the no-priority view brings out that we do not need to choose between, on the one hand, lapsing into intuitionism – simply helping ourselves to truth – and, on the other disallowing ourselves, in earning truth, the conceptual equipment that projectivism sees as the product of projection. . . . . The threat to truth is from the thought that there is not enough substance to our conception of reasons for ethical stance. When we try to meet this threat, there is no reason not to appeal to all the resources at our disposal, including all the ethical concepts we can lay our hands on, so long as they survive critical scrutiny . . . so the necessary scrutiny does not involve stepping outside the point of view constituted by an ethical sensibility. ("Projection and Truth in Ethics," p. 162)

There is no need for us to examine this claim of McDowell because we have done it in our examination of Wiggins' theory.

The Truths of Sensibility

So far, I have examined the no-priority thesis and the convergence thesis. It is plausible that these two theses hold in color perceptions. That is, there is no priority between the colors and our sensibility for them, and convergence obtains in the color perceptions of different individuals. To be sure, some people are color-blind, but we can save the convergence by dismissing them as abnormal. But the color analogy does not easily apply to our evaluative sensibility and value properties. The latter does not have the stability and convergence of the former. Let us first consider the non-moral value properties, for example, our sensibility for fashions and taste. In the

‘60s, young girls exuberated over Beatles’ music. But now the same generation may be fascinated by other musicians. Many people used to laugh at slap-stick comedies decades ago, but now standing gags have been in. Our sensibility for these things perpetually changes. The truths about these things must also perpetually change from one time to another, from one person to another, and from one culture to another. There can be no objective truths in these things, and no convergence either. Divergence and diversity are the rules. Relativism is inevitable, as I said earlier, and the no-priority rule cannot overcome it.

Our sensibility can be improved by our knowledge because our sentiments can be misguided by ignorance and misunderstanding. For example, a little boy is afraid of darkness probably because he believes there is a ghost in the darkness. But years later, when he understands that there is no ghost in the darkness, his susceptibility of darkness changes. Another example is that a new immigrant to the United States may not understand American comedians’ jokes. When he watches a talk show at night, he scarcely understands why audiences are laughing. But later on when he comes to understand various aspects of American culture, he also understands why they are laughing. Now his lack of understanding is removed, and his susceptibility is improved. So he can say that he is making a correct response to the American joke whereas he had made an incorrect one. But now suppose that he still does not find the American joke funny although he understands everything about it. In fact, this happened to me. I noticed that one of the most popular American jokes was about the mother-in-law. Every time one of those jokes was on TV, it provoked a big laughter in the audience. But I found it offensively disrespectful. I could not imagine that I could be acculturated to accept the American sensibility about those offensive jokes.

Now suppose that I had grown up in America, I would share the same sense of humor with other Americans. I would not find the mother-in-law jokes offensive.

My sense of humor would converge with the typical American sense of humor. That can be taken as the evidence that the convergence of sensibilities is a cultural phenomenon. The same cultural process can shape our moral sensibility. I had grown up in the Korean culture that severely condemned pre-marital sex. But when I came to USA, I found that most American students found nothing wrong with pre-marital sex. They did not even regard it as a moral issue. If I had grown up in USA, I believe, my moral sensibility about pre-marital sex would have converged on the American standard. Once my sensibility has been fixed by one cultural environment, it is very hard to change it to suit another cultural standard. Our natural sensibility may be the same for all human beings, but they can be shaped different by different cultures. This is what is meant by Wiggins' idea of the underdetermination or the flexibility of our sensibility. Its flexibility produces its divergence, but its convergence is secured by acculturation. Paradoxically, culture is the source of both divergence and convergence, namely, the divergence between different cultures and the convergence within one culture. Although our sensibility is originally flexible or underdetermined, it gains a strong stability once it is shaped by a culture. Once the standards become stable, then we can meaningfully talk about which responses are correct or appropriate and which responses are incorrect or inappropriate. The same process of convergence and divergence takes place in our linguistic culture. Although all human beings are born with the same native linguistic competence, it can be developed differently by growing up with different languages when they are young. Because I grew up speaking Korean, my linguistic sensibility has converged on the standard Korean grammar, which is radically different from the Chinese or the English grammar. My Korean linguistic sense is stable, although I began with a flexible linguistic competence. It is so stable and rigid that I have much difficulty in securing my convergence on the English grammar. I speak and write very often

ungrammatically, but I never notice it unless my American friends politely point it out for me. But my American friends feel it instinctively, that is, they have the American grammatical sense, but I do not have it.

If convergence is a cultural phenomenon, the convergence of moral sensibility can only vindicate cultural relativism. The convergence is limited within a given culture; I can never cut across the cultural boundaries. The normative standards are established by convergence in each culture. In that regard, the convergence of sensibilities is similar to the Peircean model of convergence, in which the scientific truths are established by convergence. Once the normative standards are established by convergence, they can function the way the first-order standards do in Mackie's ethics. The latter is established by discussion; the former is established by acculturation. Only in reference to those standards, moral judgments can gain their truth values in the sensibility theory just as they do in Mackie's theory. Therefore, moral truths are culturally relative. This theory of moral truths owes nothing to the no-priority thesis. This thesis guarantees the truth of every moral response because it is inseparably and simultaneously linked to the corresponding property. This moral truth that is guaranteed by the <response, property> has nothing to do with the truths secured in reference to the normative standards established by the cultural convergence. The former moral truth is independent of convergence. Thus the sensibility theorists have produced two kinds of normative truth. One may be called the truth by convergence, and the other the truth by pairing. We noted earlier Wiggins' desire to give the vindicatory explanation of moral truths, which is as strong as 7+5=12 is true. Such a strong sense of truth may be available for the truths by pairing, but not for the truth by convergence. The latter is no more than the truths by convention.

The cultural constraint is the basic difference between the convergence of sensibility and the Peircean convergence. Peirce would never concede the cultural barriers as the legitimate obstacle for the scientific convergence. How can the sensibility theorists handle the cultural differences in sensibility? They have indicated two approaches to this question. One of them is to say that the cultural differences can be permitted by the underdetermination of sensibility. Therefore they should be accepted and respected. This is Wiggins' attitude, as we have seen. But McDowell suggests another approach: We should critical examine the cultural differences for improving our sensibility. By learning other cultures, he says, we can get to know our culture better and even improve it. This sort learning involves critical reflection, which in turn employs practical reason. But McDowell says that our practical reason does not transcend our culture because it is our second nature that is shaped by our culture ("Two Sorts of Naturalism," p. 184). According to Aristotle, practical reason is a virtue and our virtues are cultural products. We can never take an evaluative position external to our virtues and our sensibility, which are shaped by our culture. Therefore we can never take our critical stance outside our culture. McDowell says,

> Contrast the naturalism that makes play with second nature. Any actual second nature is a cultural product; this is no less true of outlooks informed (as Aristotle's is not) by a lively sense of alternative possibilities for human life, lived out in cultures other than one's own. ("Two Sorts of Naturalism" p. 194)

The poor Aristotle was totally trapped in one culture because he knew little about other cultures. But we can be more enlightened because we can be informed "by a lively sense of alternative possibilities for human life, lived out in cultures other than one's own." In the end, however, we have to take our bearing and our critical stance in our own culture. Whether we should have confidence in our culture-bound critical stance can be determined only by our second nature. McDowell says,

> Whether confidence is in order or not is for second nature itself to assess, exploiting whatever materials for critical reflection are available: including, so

> long as they stand up to Neurathian scrutiny, concepts that are part of its specific cultural inheritance. ("Two Sorts of Naturalism," p. 194)

Just as Neurath cannot step out of his boat for fixing it, McDowell cannot take his critical stance outside his own culture. We may say that Neurath's boat and McDowell's culture are their Platonic Caves. They cannot crawl out of them.

McDowell's view that we cannot step outside our culture is similar to Blackburn's internalism, which we noted in the last chapter. He said that we can never take an external perspective, that is, external to our own attitudes and feelings. But there is one important difference between his and McDowell's position. Blackburn's internalism is dictated by our attitudes and feelings, which may or may not be culture-bound. On the other hand, McDowell's internalism is dictated by cultural barriers. His position may be called cultural internalism, and Blackburn's view may be called natural internalism. In spite of his internalism, as we noted, Blackburn recognized the demand of universality for moral truths, which he attributed to the unity of truth ("truth is one"). In contrast, the sensibility theorists have not recognized this demand for their moral truths. Hence their model of convergence is different from the Peircean model, which is constrained by the demand of universality. If there are cultural barriers and differences in the advancement of science, they should be overcome. Without overcoming them, no scientist can meaningfully talk about the scientific truth. Just imagine that the Chinese conception of matter is different from the European conception. It would make no sense to say that one of them is true without demonstrating the deficiency in the other theory. If this demonstration is based only on one's own culture, it can never overcome the cultural barriers. If the demonstration is going to be authoritative, it must be made from a

perspective that is valid for both the Chinese and the Europeans. It must be a universal perspective. This is what it means to operate under the demand and constraint of universality, that is, if something is true, it must be true universally.

Following McDowell, we may say that scientific sensibility is our second nature. It has been developed in our culture just like our moral and aesthetic sensibilities. No one can gain scientific sensibility without scientific training. Nevertheless, our scientific sensibility operates with the constraint of universality and can take a universal or objective standpoint for comparing Chinese science with European science. Now we should ask the question: "Is the demand of universality induced into our scientific sensibility or developed from our first nature by cultural training?" We can consider two answers to this question. One is to say that the demand of universality has nothing to do with our first nature and has been created together with our scientific sensibility by cultural training. The other answer is to say that the demand of universality is an essential feature of our first nature and has been developed along with our scientific sensitivity by cultural training. These two answers give two different accounts of the relation between first and second nature. One of them says that second nature is the development of first nature; the other one says that second nature is an alien imposition on the first. The first one is the Aristotelian model; the second one is the Pavlovian model. These two models can make a lot of difference in talking about culture-bound perspectives. If we take the Aristotelian model, one can take a universal perspective even when one takes his stand within his own culture. In spite of his cultural perspective, his perspective is inherently universal, that is, it is conscious of the demand of universality and

objectivity. This is the way Aristotle operates in his examination of ethical and political issues although he is not much learned about other cultures. On the other hand, if we take the Pavlovian model, we will be trapped in stringent cultural relativism. McDowell's Neurathian analogy may reflect the Pavlovian cultural relativism. If one is trapped in such a stringent form of relativism, one can talk about the truth value of moral judgments only within one's cultural context. One can never even feel the demand of universality. This is another way of saying that the sensibility theory is doomed to moral relativism or the relativism of sensibility.

The two ways of looking at the relation between first and second nature can explain two different ways of achieving convergence. If their relation is a natural development, then convergence can also be achieved by natural development. On the other hand, if their relation is an alien imposition, then convergence can be achieved by coercive enforcement. The Catholic Church imposed convergence on all Christendom by burning heretics at stake. This is an example of coercive convergence. On the other hand, the convergence of modern science has been achieved not by coercion, but by free discussion. This is an example of free or natural convergence. In both cases, there is pressure for convergence. The pressure for coercive convergence is political and social. It comes from the outside. On one hand, the pressure for free or natural convergence is not political or social. It does not come from the outside, but arises from the inside. In the face of divergent views, the scientists feel the need for their convergence within their own scientific sensibility. When a scientist and the Catholic Church say that truth is one, they generate different kinds of pressure for convergence. One is the internal pressure; the other is the

external pressure. When Blackburn talks about the demand of universality, he is talking about the internal pressure for convergence. But I cannot tell whether the sensibility theorists attribute the convergence of sensibilities to the internal or the external pressure. Sometimes they recognize the social pressure for convergence, and that looks like external pressure. On the other hand, they sometimes give the impression that our sensibilities freely converge and create social order. In that case, the convergence is the outcome of its own internal pressure. I confess that I have not been able to resolve this ambiguity in their theory.

Chapter 4

Moral Truth and Objective Values

The last three chapters have shown that the three moral theories I have examined look very much alike in spite of their surface differences. Let us be clear about their common ground. All of them repudiate objective or transcendent values (or standards). They all begin with the subjective response, which are sometimes given different names. Mackie calls it moral sense or intuition. Blackburn calls it attitude or feeling. Wiggins and McDowell calls it moral sensibility or sentiments. All of them agree that moral standards are constructed by human beings—sometimes by contract, sometimes by convention, and sometimes by convergence. By virtue of the conventional standards, they say, we can talk about the truth and falsity of moral judgments, although there are no real moral properties or objective values. This amounts to Blackburn's quasi-realism. Although he often uses this expression, he never gives a clear definition of quasi-realism. Instead he gives a description of the quasi-realist as "a person who, starting from a recognizably anti-realist position, finds himself progressively able to mimic the intellectual practices supposedly definitive of realism" (*Essays in Quasi-Realism*, p. 15). In substance, quasi-realism is no different from antirealism. But the quasi-realist mimics the realist in talking about the truth and falsity of moral judgments, that is, he thinks and talks as though they were really true. With the conventional standards, Mackie, Wiggins, and McDowell can join Blackburn in the game of mimicking the realist by talking about the truth and falsity of moral propositions. Therefore I regard all their theories as different versions of

moral quasi-realism. But this overview may overlook some important points of difference. In order to highlight their differences, I will go over the critiques these philosophers have made of one another.

McDowell's Critique of Mackie and Blackburn

Mackie's Lockean perceptual model for perception is the first target for McDowell's critique because the Lockean model goes against his no-priority thesis. He objects to Mackie's color analogy, especially the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. McDowell holds that the distinction in question is false because the separate existence of primary qualities from secondary ones is impossible phenomenologically. But he says that Mackie adopts the primary-quality model for value judgments. He says, "Mackie holds that the model [of value judgments] must be perceptual awareness of *primary* qualities" ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 132). But McDowell appears to be wrong on this point. As a matter of fact, Mackie labels the primary-quality model as the objectivist or intuitionist nodel, which he describes as follows:

> There is a moral sense, analogous to the perception of a primary quality, though the moral quality of an action or character must somehow result from its other features . . . . The virtue (or vice) is this objective quality, detected by this special moral sense. Moral statements typically say that such a quality is found in a certain action (etc.); they are capable of being simply true or false. (*Hume's Moral Theory*, p. 73)

Mackie clearly rejects the model of primary-quality perception. He says, "I think there are good reasons for not adopting the intuitionist theory" (*Hume's Moral Theory*, p. 74).

McDowell's second criticism is that Mackie's epistemic model cannot explain one feature of moral experience, namely, prescriptivity. This criticism is linked closely to his first criticism. According to McDowell, there is a fundamental disanalogy between secondary qualities and values. He says,

> But the reflection on the case of secondary qualities has already opened a gap between that admission and any concession that values are not genuine aspects of reality. And the point is reinforced by a crucial disanalogy between values and secondary qualities. ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 143)

A primary quality model cannot explain the prescriptive force of moral judgments because no primary qualities can prescribe anything. McDowell believes that the prescriptive force can be better explained by his phenomenology than Mackie's primary-quality model. He holds that there is an inseparability or no-priority between moral properties and moral responses and that the prescriptive force arises from their inseparability. McDowell does not seem to recognize that his criticism of Mackie on prescriptivity is exactly the same as the criticism Mackie has made against the objective moral values or properties. Mackie clearly rejects the model of primary qualities for value judgments,

> What is the connection between the natural fact that an action is a piece of deliberate cruelty?—say, causing pain just for fun—and the moral fact that it is wrong? It cannot be an entailment, a logical or semantic necessity. Yet it is not merely that the two features occur together. The wrongness must somehow be 'consequential' or 'supervenient'; it is wrong because it is a piece of deliberate cruelty. But just what in the world is signified by this 'because'? (*Ethics*, p. 41)

He goes on to say, "It is not even sufficient to postulate a faculty that 'sees' the wrongness." He attributes the prescriptivity of moral judgment to the subjective response.

> How much simpler and more comprehensible the situation would be if we could replace the moral quality with some sort of subjective response which could be causally related to the detection of the natural features on which the supposed quality is said to be consequential. (*Ethics,* p. 41)

In his third criticism, McDowell argues that Mackie's theory cannot explain the objectivity of our moral experience, because he employs a primary quality model. McDowell holds that his no-priority theory assures the phenomenological objectivity of value experience, which is undermined by Mackie's primary-quality model. He talks about the advantage of his model in comparison with Mackie's.

> Values are not brutely there—not there independently of our sensibility—any more than colours are: though, as with colours, this does not stop us supposing that they are there independently of any particular apparent experience of them. As for the epistemology of value, the epistemology of danger is a good model. . . . To drop the primary-quality model in this case is to give up the idea that fearfulness itself, were it real, would need to be intelligible from a standpoint independent of the propensity to fear. ("Values and Secondary Qualities," p. 146).

McDowell is saying that Mackie's primary-quality model requires the values to exist independently of our sensibility, although such independent values are never found. In his view, the primary-quality model has misled Mackie to believe that objective values do not exist and consequently to espouse his error theory. McDowell holds that the objectivity of values can be saved by his no-priority thesis.

According to these criticisms, McDowell thinks that what separates Mackie's moral theory from his sensibility theory is Mackie's acceptance of the Lockean distinction between primary and secondary qualities and McDowell's own no-priority thesis against the Lockean model. As we noted in the last chapter, however, the no-priority thesis cannot secure objective values in the intersubjective world. My sensibility can secure a property as the object for my perception, but it cannot do the same for your perception. For example, I can see the property of being fearful or dangerous in a snake and this property is provided by my sensibility. But when you

look at the same snake, you many not see anything fearful or dangerous in your sensibility. The property of being fearful or dangerous is "objective" to my sensibility. In that sense, it is an "objective" property. But it is not an object for your experience. The no-priority thesis holds only within one subjective world. Two different subjects may share the same sensibility, but such sharing is an accident. When the accident happens, it is called the convergence. Only by the miracle of convergence, the sensibility theorists can expect to establish some shared standards. In this regard, they are no different from Mackie. For the latter, the community standards of the first-order morality are not given or projected by moral sense, but constructed by convention. The construction of community standards are prompted by the needs for the regulation of excessive desires. This may be one way to achieve the convergence of different moral sensibilities. In the last chapter, we considered a few other ways of achieving convergence, some of them coercive and others non-coercive. Whatever methods may be used, the theory of convergence produces the conventional moral standards just as Mackie's method of contract based on moral sense, wants and desires. Hence the outcome of moral sensibility theory is substantially the same as Mackie's theory.

McDowell also opposes Blackburn's projectivism. His main argument is that Blackburn's projectivism cannot properly talk about moral truth,

> To begin with at least, it is natural to put the projectivist thought, and Blackburn characteristically does put it, by saying that ethical commitments should not be understood as having truth-conditions. That would represent ethical remarks as statements about how things are, and according to projectivism they should be taken rather to express attitudes or sentiments. But quasi-realism is supposed to make room for all the trappings of realism, including the idea that the notion of truth applies after all to ethical remarks. In that case, the original sharp contrast between putting forward a candidate for being true and expressing an attitude or sentiment cannot be right: a remark that expresses an attitude can also affirm a truth. ("Projections and Truth in Ethics," p. 153)

If moral judgments are the attitudes and sentiments, McDowell says, they can describe nothing and can have no truth values. Therefore his quasi-realism is not likely to reinstate moral truths,

> What Blackburn does—and this is centrally important to the point I want to make—is to contrast an *unearned* appeal to the notion of truth, which is what the projectivist rejects, with an *earned* right to the use of the notion, which is what the quasi-realist reinstates. The point about the application of the notion of truth that quasi-realism is supposed to make available is that we do not merely help ourselves to it, but work for it. ("Projections and Truth in Ethics," p. 153)

As long as Blackburn sticks to attitudes and sentiments in his account of moral judgments, McDowell says, he can never overcome the emotivists' curse which haunts Alasdair MacIntyre. Indeed, the emotivists have claimed that moral judgments are no more than emotive expressions that have no truth values. Although MacIntyre agrees on Stevenson's account regarding the nature of moral judgments, he still believes that moral truth can be discussed. McDowell says that MacIntyre's aspiration cannot succeed.

> But if MacIntyre's Stevensoian picture is correct, we lack what a more substantial notion of truth seems plainly to require, a conception of better and worse ways to think about ethical questions that connects with the idea that there are reasons for being of certain mind on a question. Contrast the suggestion that there is nothing to ethical thinking but rationally arbitrary subjective stances and whatever power relations might be exploited to shift people's ethical allegiances. ("Projections and Truth in Ethics," p. 156)

McDowell is saying that MacIntyre cannot go much further than Sevensonian emotitivism. Neither can Blackburn, according to McDowell. Consequently, Blackburn has not earned the right to reinstate the notion of moral truths.

McDowell further claims that Blackburn adopts projectivism because he has a wrong assumption about metaphysical options,

> It may still seem that, even if earning truth in the face of this sort of challenge to its availability requires something other than an explicitly metaphysical move, namely vindicating the richness and robustness of the conception of

> reasons for ethical judgements that our conceptual resources equip us with, nevertheless, as soon as we concede that attaining truth is not simply a matter of "cognizing" evaluative facts, we must have implicitly adopted a projectivist metaphysic. This appearance reflects an assumption that, at metaphysical level, there are just two options; projectivism and the unattractive intuitionistic realism that populates reality with mysterious extra features and merely goes through the motions of supplying an epistemology for our supposed access to them. But the assumption is questionable. ("Projections and Truth in Ethics," p. 157)

Intuitionistic realism gives the priority to objective properties over subjective responses, whereas projectivism gives the priority to subjective attitudes over moral properties. Beyond these two metaphysical alternatives, McDowell is proposing his no-priority thesis as the third alternative. McDowell's criticism that Blackburn's projectivism does not offer any more substantial ground for moral truths than Stevenson's emotivism is quite unfair. There is a clear difference between the two. Emotivism is simply expressive: Moral judgments just express emotions. On the other hand, projectivism talks about the projection of moral properties. This was Hume's idea. As we saw in chapter 1, Mackie says, "If we admit what Hume calls the mind's 'propensity to spread itself on external objects', we can understand the supposed objectivity of moral attitudes as arising from what we can call the projection or objectification of moral attitudes" (*Ethics*, p. 42). Blackburn accepts this Humean notion of projection. Hence his projectivism creates moral properties and those properties provide the ground for moral truths. So, it is unfair for McDowell to say that Blackburn has not earned the right to talk of moral truths.

As far as moral properties are concerned, there is little difference between projectivism and sensibility theory. According to projectivism, moral properties are created by moral attitudes or sentiments. According to sensibility theory, they are created by moral sensibility. After all, the sensibility theorists say that moral properties are just anthropological, not natural. Initially, the difference between these two theories consists in their view of priority. Projectivism assigns priority to moral

attitudes over moral properties, whereas moral sensibility theory claims no priority for either of them. But their debate about the nature of moral properties becomes inconsequential because after all each theory equally endorses the idea that moral properties are created—by the projection of moral attitudes or by the civilized sensibility. Similarly, the priority question becomes inconsequential too because the notion of moral properties cannot provide the ground of moral truths. For that reason, McDowell and Wiggins have resorted to convergence to obtain objective moral standards. Likewise, Blackburn regards divergence as a serious obstacle for moral truths. So he says,

> It [i.e., the fallacy of relativism allowing moral views to diverge] means that an evaluative system should contain the resources to transcend the tree structure [i.e., the structure of divergence]: evidence that there is a node [of diverging views] itself implies that it is wrong to maintain either of the conflicting commitments. It is itself a signal that the right attitude . . . is not that expressed by either of these partial perspectives. The better perspective may judge the merits equal, or it may award the prize to just one view . . . . So in practice evidence that there is a node is just treated as a signal that the truth is not yet finally argued, and it goes into discussions as part of evidence. We are constrained to argue and practice as though truth is single, and this constraint is defensible in spite of the apparent possibility of the tree-structure. (*Spreading the Word*, p. 201)

This is Blackburn's indirect argument for convergence. But he says little about the mechanism that can bring about convergence—as little as Wiggins and McDowell have done. Convergence is surely important for constructing community standards. Blackburn does recognize the need for such standards for social cooperation,

> We are social animals, with certain biological needs. We have to coordinate our efforts; we have to establish systems of property and promise-keeping and sometimes even government. We can then take comfort in reflecting that there are not so many admirable, coherent, mature, livable ethical systems on offer; indeed rather than being faced with a whole shopping basket of such things, our usual problem is to find as much as one that survives elementary critical reflection. (*Ruling Passions*, p. 308)

Blackburn advocates the use of critical reflection and discussion for the construction of social standards. But he never undertakes the task of constructing them. Neither do Wiggins and McDowell. Only Mackie has tried to do it and called it "morality in the narrow sense." On this point, he is way ahead of Blackburn, Wiggins, and McDowell. Strangely, however, Blackburn has ridiculed his construction of moral standards by calling it shmoralizing. To be sure, Blackburn says that he adopts the motive-consequentialism. What he adopts is not the motive-utilitarianism, but the laundered utilitarianism as we noted in the last chapter. We also noted that his adoption cannot be complete until he specifies the normative criteria for the laundering task. So he has never really constructed his own moral system.

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Blackburn's Criticism of the Sensibility Theory

Blackburn is as critical of sensibility theory as McDowell is of his projectivism. He rejects McDowell's no-priority thesis. Blackburn says that his projectivism and the sensibility theory share the view that "a person's ethical outlook is dependent on affective or conative aspects of his makeup" ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealists," p. 170). If our moral judgments are dependent on our affective or conative aspects, he maintains, the latter must be the cause for the former. That establishes the priority of subjective attitudes and sentiments over moral judgments. Moreover, he objects to the perceptual model in sensibility theory, that is, the idea of literally perceiving value properties. The word 'see' is ambiguous. He says, "Everyone can say that one can 'see' what one must do or what needs to be done, just as one can see that 17 is prime" ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealists," p. 170). No one can literally see what one must do any more than one can literally see that 17 is prime. By 'see' it is meant to recognize something like a prime number that cannot be physically perceivable. Such recognition requires standards. One can "see" a prime number only if one has the

standard to judge whether a number is prime or not. Blackburn says, "We reach ethical verdicts about the behavior of described agents or actions in the light of general standards" ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealists," p. 170). He goes on to say, "[I]t is stretching things to see these general standards as perceptually formed or maintained." He says that the sensibility theorists are stuck to the perceptual model because of their no-priority view.

I am not sure whether this criticism is fair or unfair to McDowell and Wiggins because I can never be certain that they regard the value properties as perceptual. But Blackburn is talking about an important point, namely, that our value judgments always involve some normative standards. We can imagine two models of judgments. One of them may be called the model of immediate response, and the other the model of mediated response. When I see a big football player falling upon another, my perception of this event is immediate. On the other hand, when a referee calls a foul for the same event, his call is a mediated response. That is, he can make the call only in reference to the football rules, which set the standards for foul plays. If he does not know the standards, he cannot make the call. On the other hand, anybody can perceive one big football player falling upon another without consulting any rule books. Therefore the perception is an immediate response. McDowell and Wiggins have never discussed whether the relation between response and property is immediate or mediated. But their no priority thesis seems to dictate that their relation is immediate, that is, it involves no consideration of standards. They have stressed that property and response are inseparably connected with each other in every <property, response> pair. This inseparable connection seems to leave no room for consulting some standards. If this is true, it is a critical deficiency in sensibility theory. Although Blackburn has exposed a critical weakness in his opponents, it is

ironical that he has never stressed the role of normative standards in his exposition of projectivism.

If moral sensibility involves standards, it cannot be sensibility, pure and simple. Instead, sensibility is intimately linked to critical intelligence. The use of moral standards in moral judgments can also affect the function of projectivism. The Humean notion of projection is an immediate response. When Hume says that the mind has the propensity to spread its values over external objects, he does not mean that the mind makes this operation deliberately. The mind does it so spontaneously and so instinctively that we do not even notice its operation and take it for granted that the projected properties are objective entities. Such an automatic and instinctive operation cannot involve the use of standards. Our perception of even primary qualities is also instinctive and automatic. For example, when I see a tree, my perception is instinctive. I do not have to use any standards. But when I say that I see a tree, I have to use a standard, namely, the standard with which to tell a tree from non-trees. When I say that the tree is ten feet tall, I again have to use the standard, namely, the standard of measurement. Only when I use the standards, I can really say that I am making a judgment. Only then the truth of my judgment can be assessed by reference to the standards I have used. The same is true with moral judgments. If my projection of attitude or sentiment is automatic and does not involve the use of standard, I am not really making a moral judgment. I may be merely expressing my emotion as the emotivists say. When I use moral standards, however, I do not merely express my emotions, but make moral judgments, whose truth values can be ascertained by using those moral standards. Hence it is paramount to distinguish a moral projection from a moral judgment. But Blackburn has not made this distinction because he has never recognized the function of standards in his projectivism.

Blackburn also attacks the convergence theory of McDowell and Wiggins. He says that although civilization may have something to do with the development of moral values, it is not the real source of the truths of moral values. Blackburn questions, "The implicit plea that we get our responses to life into civilized shape is admirable, but is it enough to locate a view of the nature of ethics, or is there a danger of confusing uplift with theory?" ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealists," p. 171) Civilization must play an important role in providing conventional moral standards by the convergence of moral sensibilities. Blackburn approves the idea that moral improvements have taken place through civilization.

> Certainly, it is true that when we have gone through some process of ethical improvement, we can turn back and say that now we have got something *right*—now we appreciate the value of things as they are, whereas before we did not. ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealists," p. 171)

If moral judgments depend on sensibility, whose development in turn depends on the development of civilization, we can never say that we have got something *right* for the first time. On the contrary, we can never be wrong because our moral judgments are dictated by our moral sensibility. As we noted in the last chapter, the pairing of property and response is infallible. Blackburn cannot take this consequence of sensibility theory. Ironically, however, Blackburn's own projectivism cannot escape the same criticism. If moral judgments are the projections of our attitudes or feelings, they can never be wrong, either. He can avoid this criticism only by conceding that there are right and wrong attitudes and by providing the criterion for discriminating the right from the wrong attitudes. But he has never done that.

The convergence can never guarantee the rightness of those moral standards. In chapter 3, I made the same criticism. The convergence is an agreement. I said that the agreement of the flat-earthers cannot guarantee the truth of their view that the earth is flat. In chapter 2, we noted that Blackburn takes divergence as a mark of

departing from moral cognitivism. When two moral views diverge from each other, he assumes that both cannot be true, therefore, at least one of them is false. Although divergence can be taken as a mark of error, he should have said, convergence cannot be taken as a mark of truth. Blackburn complains that Wiggins attributes all values to civilization. He says, "Is it a good theoretical description or explanation of the fact that we value friendship that, first, it is good and, second, civilization has 'made' our sensibilities 'for' the property of goodness?" ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealists," pp. 171-72). According to the sensibility theory, he is saying, friendship is made good by civilization, which has shaped our sensibility. He regards this as an absurd view. Although Wiggins and McDowell gives civilization an enormous power of shaping our values, he further complains, they give no teleology and nor evolutionary background for its development ("How to Be an Ethical Antirealists," p. 172). McDowell and Wiggins try to explain everything by civilization, but do nothing to explain civilization itself. Therefore, civilization remains a black box in their sensibility theory.

Blackburn's critique of Wiggins and McDowell in their use of civilization is incisive. But I believe that they can defend their position by claiming that Blackburn has paid no attention to the role of civilization in shaping our moral sensibilities. When he talks about moral attitudes in his projectivism, he never considers whether those attitudes are natural or shaped by different cultures. If they are natural and original with human nature, they should be the same in all societies. Obviously, that is not the case. Quite often, different moral attitudes reflect the difference of cultures and subcultures. For that reason, Blackburn's projectivism can never be complete without taking into account the cultural differences in shaping moral attitudes and sentiments. But he has ignored this important dimension of moral sensibility. Although McDowell and Wiggins have said nothing about the teleology and the

evolutionary background of civilization, they can at least claim the credit of recognizing the power of civilization. But Blackburn has not even done this little. Anyone who overlooks the power of culture in talking about moral attitudes and sentiments is truly morally blind.

Ironically, the mutual criticisms of these philosophers quite often turn out to be applicable to their own positions. They are condemning themselves by condemning their opponents. Their central contention is that their opponents have not provided adequate ontology for securing moral truths. In case moral truths are not secured, they cannot be called cognitivists. Nor can they overcome all the evils of subjectivism and relativism. This catastrophe is not out of question. All of them have repudiated objective values by claiming that they cannot take any external perspectives that lie beyond human sensibility. All of them have tried to build their moral theories on the basis of subjective resources such as moral attitudes, sentiments, and sensibilities. In this sense, all of them are internalists. There is a possibility that the internalists fail to get out of the trap of sheer subjectivism. This point is fully illustrated by Michael Smith in his fable of the Wheel of Internalism ("Internalism's Wheel"). So I propose to take a ride on this fabled wheel.

The Wheel of Internalism

In Michael Smith's internalism, moral judgments and beliefs are directly connected to moral desires and sentiments. The moral life is built completely on the internal or subjective resources. In his account of the Wheel of Internalism, the connection of moral judgments to moral motivation is as important as moral truths. But I will ignore the problem of moral motivation to simplify Smith's fable of the Wheel of Internalism. I will only consider the problem of moral judgments, moral standards, and moral truths.

The fable of the Wheel begins with expressivism. To Smith, expressivists claim that our moral judgments are expression of certain emotions, desires or feelings, rather than statements about real properties. The problem of expressivism is that it can endorse no idea of truth. Since expressivism usually regards moral judgments just as utterances of emotion or feeling, this theory cannot properly discuss moral truth. So, Smith believes that expressivism cannot be a plausible choice. This notion of expressivism is different from Blackburn's expressivism because he believes that we express moral attitudes or sentiments, not just pure emotion of feeling.

Next, Smith tackles the speaker relativism of James Drier. The speaker relativism is limited to one individual: A person's moral judgments express his affective or motivational attitudes, the attitudes of his concern are the ones expressed in a normal condition, not the ones brought about by arbitrary subjectivity. What is a normal condition? This is a difficult question, as Michael Smith explains. We can avoid this sticky problem by radicalizing the speaker relativism. The problem of normal condition arises only when we try to attribute a system of attitudes or values to one person over a long stretch of time, in which he is sometimes normal and sometimes abnormal. To avoid this complexity, we can restrict the speaker relativism of one individual at any given moment. The next moment, the same individual may have a different set of attitudes and values. In that case, the difference of relativistic standards can obtain within the span of one individual as much as across different individuals.

In Michael Smith's fable, what counts is not the durability of a value system in one individual, but the difference between two relativists. When one speaker relativist changes his moral standards, he becomes a relativist different from the one he was before. His former self and his present self are two different relativists. Smith's main question is how the difference of two speaker relativists can be resolved.

This question can be ignored by a committed relativist. One relativist can say to another that each of them is entitled to one's own moral attitudes and beliefs and that neither of them should even think of meddling with the moral judgments of the other. If the two speaker relativists take this policy of non-interference, Smith's Wheel of Internalism cannot budge even an inch. It will be stuck forever in the speaker relativism. Michael Smith never considers this scenario probably because it is so pathetic. He would like to move the two speaker relativists out of their subjective positions. If he can achieve this, he says that he regards it as "progress." He considers the possibility that one of the speaker relativist can impose his moral attitudes and values on the other. But he says that will be an unjustified use of coercive power, which will be no different from the gangster's use of coercion on his victim ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 79).

Smith next considers Gilbert Harman's moral relativism, which has a broader scope than the speaker relativism. He distinguishes "inner judgments" from "outer judgments." The inner judgment is each person's judgment of what ought to be done. The outer judgment evaluates other people's characters. The system of moral attitudes and values is not restricted to any one individual, but is shared by a community of individuals. Harman introduces a notion of "maximally coherent and rational set." This set is constructed by people's agreement in motivating attitudes or intentions. The agreement here is made not by an overt ritual or ceremony, but by "the understanding that others also have [the same] intentions" ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 80). The set functions to provide people with the criterion of moral judgments. They can talk about the truth and falsity of their moral judgments in reference to the standards or the set of values. But they cannot do the same with the members of another community, which subscribes to an entirely different set of attitudes or

standards. For example, they cannot say that Hitler is evil because he does not share their moral standards. This is why his theory is moral relativism.

According to Harman, even though different groups of people have different notions of moral obligation, we can still condemn Hitler on moral grounds. According to Smith,

> [In terms of Harman's relativism,] [t]he true claims Hitler could make about his moral obligations may therefore be completely different from the true claims we could make about ourselves. . . . However, despite the fact he thinks this form of moral relativism is true, Harman insists that we can and do rightly condemn Hitler on moral grounds. This is because we can do rightly say of Hitler that he is evil, where the truth of this claim requires nothing from a maximally coherent and rational Hitler in the say of suitable pro- or con-attitude. ("Internalism's Wheel," pp. 83-84)

But it does not make sense that we can condemn Hitler while retaining Harman's relativism. Harman can insist the wrongness of Hitler's conducts by relying on moral grounds independent of Nazi Germany's "maximally coherent and rational set." But the existence of the independent moral grounds conflicts with his relativism. Harman's Hitler is similar to Bertrand Russell's bullfight. In Mackie's *Ethics*, we noted that Russell was disturbed over the fact that his moral perspective did not permit him to say that the bullfight was evil objectively although he truly believed that it was objectively evil. To his credit, Russell was honest in admitting the shortcoming of his moral view. But Harman does not have the Russellian honesty. He believes that he still has the right to condemn Hitler's conducts, and can still call himself a relativist. He can enjoy all the privileges of both worlds: the world of moral relativism and the world of moral realism. That is theoretically inconsistent. This is "the inherent *limits*" of Harmanian relativism, according to Smith. Normatively speaking, Smith says, the difference between two Harmanian relativists is no different from the difference between the two speaker relativists of Drier. In both cases, to impose some relativistic standards on someone who does not share them is the use of

coercive power, which is basically the same as the gangster's coercion of his victims ("Internalism's Wheel," pp. 84-85).

To get out of Harman's problem, Michael Smith turns his Wheel of Internalism to the non-relative dispositional theory of value. According to this theory, Smith says, all moral judgments are inner judgments. They are based on the subjective attitudes and sentiments. But those judgments are non-relative because they "would converge upon the same set of pro- and con-attitudes if we each came up with a maximally coherent and rational set of such attitudes" ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 86). Thus we again run into the notion of convergence. Smith anticipates that the converged set may cure the problem of relativism. Smith recognizes two types of convergence: necessary and contingent. Smith defines the contingent convergence as follows:

> In the actual world we would all have maximally coherent and rational sets of pro- and con-attitudes with the same content, the content of our moral obligations, but there is another possible world in which different agents have maximally coherent and rational sets of pro- and con-attitudes with different content. ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 87)

Smith says that the contingent convergence cannot overcome the limits of Harmanian relativism. Imagine two possible worlds, each of which has its own convergence of moral attitudes and standards. But the normative standards of one possible world are different from those of the other possible world. This difference is as relativistic as the difference in Harmanian relativism. If these two possible worlds are combined into one, the combined world will no longer have the convergence. The combined world will have all the problems of Harmanian relativism ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 87).

Since the contingent convergence cannot solve the problem of relativism, Smith takes the necessary convergence. But there are two serious problems with the concept of necessary convergence, according to Smith. The first one is that the idea

of necessary convergence is not in harmony with the dispositional theory of value which is based on "ordinary everyday meaning" of coherence and rationality. That is, the concept of necessary convergence requires that moral truths are necessary truth. The dispositional theory value hardly accepts the kind of convergence and the notion of moral truth. It is impossible that everyone can agree on the single set of moral truths and attitudes. Smith says, "Just think again about Hitler." We can never avoid the Hitlers, who have a coherent set of attitudes and standards, which are disagreeably different from others' coherent set of attitudes and standards. Even if we grant the plausibility or possibility of the necessary convergence, Smith says, we have to face one more problem.

The other problem with the necessary convergence is that necessary convergence conflicts with the notion of moral truth which the dispositional theory of value presupposes. According to necessary convergence, there should be moral truths independent of our attitudes. But the dispositional theory of value rejects such truths. The dispositional theory of value cannot explain the notion of moral truth. So, Smith says, "But if this is part of what we presuppose in presupposing that there would be a necessary convergence in our maximally coherent and rational sets of pro- and con-attitudes, then the non-relative version of the dispositional theory of value has clearly been abandoned. Facts about our moral obligations are being thought of as independent, thus far unanalyzed, facts" ("Internalism's Wheel," pp. 88-89). The second problem is well illustrated by an example I already mentioned. For a long time in human history, the flat-earthers agreed unanimously that the earth was flat, because nobody had even thought of the earth as round. Even if they could have made a universal agreement, their belief was still false. So, necessary convergence requires more than just universal agreement. From this, we can see that the dispositional theory of value cannot cope with the notion of moral truth which may be

attained by necessary convergence. If the convergence is necessary, it means that there are objectively prescriptive values that Mackie endeavors to reject.

To account for necessary convergence and the moral truth by the convergence, Michael Smith now turns to moral Platonism. He says that moral Platonism is supposed to provide independent moral facts ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 90). He further says that these independent facts can also explain the possibility of necessary convergence. Because moral facts are independent, Smith says, they are like primary qualities as opposed to secondary qualities. Pro- and con-attitudes converge necessarily "because they are, by definition, formed in response to the objectively prescriptive features of things" ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 89). According to him, moral Platonism is a perceptual model for moral knowledge. In this perceptual model, moral facts play a causally crucial role in generating moral knowledge ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 90).

Now Smith contends that this Platonic account of moral knowledge and moral facts is incoherent,

> But moral knowledge—or, at any rate, knowledge of fundamental moral truths or general principles—is a relatively *a priori* matter, and, however we are to conceive of *a priori* knowledge in general, it seems quite inappropriate to suppose that we gain such knowledge via causal contact with the *a priori* truths. ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 91)

Let us be clear about Smith's charge of incoherence against Platonism. On one hand, the Platonic moral knowledge is alleged to be the *a priori* knowledge of fundamental moral truths or general principles. On the other hand, this *a priori* knowledge is supposed be derived via causal contact with *a priori* truths. The first point is a well-known feature of Platonism. But the second point has never been made by the Platonists. The second point involves the notion of the causal contact for generating knowledge. Causal contact is possible only between two empirical entities. But the

object of Platonic knowledge is not empirical but transcendent, and there can be no causal contact between the transcendent object and a human subject. If such causal contact were possible, the Platonic Forms would have become the objects of empirical and scientific inquiries. The notion of causal contact for moral knowledge is totally alien to Platonism. Then, why does Smith introduce this un-Platonic point in his attempt to show the incoherence of Platonism?

I believe that Smith is mixing up two doctrines: moral Platonism (or moral objectivism) and moral realism. When he outlined moral Platonism, he said nothing about the fact that Platonic Forms are supposed to be transcendent objects. He treated moral Platonism as equivalent to moral realism, which can be described without mentioning any transcendent objects. According to moral realism, moral properties are immanent and real in this world. Everything Smith said about moral Platonism is true of moral realism, therefore un-Platonic. According to moral Platonism, he said, moral facts are independent facts. This is clearly un-Platonic. Smith also said that the perception of moral facts is like the perception of primary qualities. Again this view is un-Platonic. Given the perceptual model, it is natural for him to say that moral knowledge is causally derived from moral facts. This is again un-Platonic. The causal or perpetual model of knowledge can never deliver *a priori* knowledge. According to the perceptual model of moral realism, moral knowledge must be empirical. If the Platonists accept the causal theory of moral knowledge, they cannot say that moral knowledge is *a priori.* Nor can they say that moral knowledge is the knowledge of general principles because empirical knowledge is always the knowledge of particulars. But Smith correctly notes that the Platonic moral

knowledge is supposed to be the *a priori* knowledge of general principles. Hence he claims that the Platonic theory of moral knowledge is incoherent. But the incoherence is not in Plato's theory, but is introduced by Smith's own confusion between moral Platonism and moral realism.

On the presumed incoherence of moral Platonism, Smith is compelled to repudiate Platonism. Thus he has reached the end of his ride on the Wheel of Internalism. He describes the disappointment of his long ride as follows:

> These theories form a spectrum, from the extreme subjectivism of speaker relativism to the equally extreme objectivism of moral platonism. What should we conclude from the fact that they all fail? ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 91)

Smith says that we may not get out of the Wheel of Internalism if moral Platonism fails. It is because the failure of moral Platonism may indicate that moral judgments do not express moral beliefs at all, but only emotions and feelings. So, we are driven back to expressivism or emotivism in the Wheel of Internalism. But Smith says that he can find a way to avoid falling back to expressism or emotivism. His proposal is to salvage the non-relative version of dispositional theory and secure the convergence of attitudes by the various contractarian devices such as the ideal observer, the veil of ignorance, and the role-reversal test ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 93). By this method, Smith says, we can find the stable point for the Wheel of Internalism ("Internalism's Wheel," p. 94). The idea is that we can stabilize the Wheel of Internalism although we cannot get off it. He says that this is good news for internalists. This is the moral of Smith's fable on the Wheel of Internalism. This is basically the same idea as Mackie's construction of community standards, Blackburn's attainment of moral truth by projection and discussion, and the sensibility theorists' convergence toward moral truth. All of them end with the proposal for constructing a system of conventional moral standards. But such a constructed system of moral standards cannot account for

moral truths. Moreover, the convergence of attitudes and standards cannot be achieved without appealing to objective moral truth. The constructed moral standards do not tell us what moral judgments and beliefs can be really true or false. We can only say that our judgments are true or false only in reference to our constructed standards. Their truth value is not real, but only quasi-real. Thus Smith's project ends up with another version of Blackburn's quasi-realism.

The Ladder of Platonic Ascent

The metaphor of a wheel is misleading for Michael Smith's fable. In this story, he takes us through four levels of moral judgments: (1) expressivism (or emotivism), (2) speaker relativism, (3) Harman's relativism, (4) the non-relative dispositional theory, and (5) moral Platonism. If the sequence of these five positions is to operate like the rotation of a wheel, the fifth position should logically lead to the first position. But Smith says that he can move from the fifth position back to the fourth position instead of moving on to the first position. One can also move from the fifth position back to the second or the third position. I think the metaphor of a ladder is much more descriptive of the relation of these four positions. For instance, the third position is relatively higher than the second one. Although both of them belong to relativism, the third one commands a broader scope of agreement than the second one. For that reason, Harman's relativism may be regarded as a higher form of relativism than the speaker relativism. The same thing is true of the relation between the third position (Harman's relativism) and the fourth position (the non-relative dispositional theory of values). The fifth position (moral Platonism) can be regarded as the highest position because it is impossible to conceive of any higher position than that. According to Plato's allegory of the cave, most of us are trapped in our caves of local beliefs and

local moral standards. When we step out of these caves and move toward the transcendent Forms of Justice, we are ascending the Platonic Ladder.

For Platonists, the most basic distinction in moral discourse is the distinction between the positive and the transcendent norms. The positive norms are instituted by human beings and are subject to empirical studies. The transcendent norms cannot be investigated by the empirical method. In fact, they are empirically inaccessible. This is the main reason for the standard rejection of transcendent norms. But I have argued the indispensability of transcendent norms throughout this dissertation. Because of the transcendence of Platonic Forms, as I said earlier, moral Platonism is different from moral realism, which does not claim the transcendence of moral properties. In fact, these two theories are two forms of externalism. Moral Platonism had one advantage over moral realism. The common complaint against the latter is that moral properties are supposed to be real, but not empirically inaccessible. That seems to say that moral properties are empirically real but empirically inaccessible. That sounds "queer" in the sense that Mackie has used this word. He says that there is no sense organ for the perception of moral properties. These charges cannot be made against Platonic entities, because they are presented not as empirical but as transcendent entities. These two versions of externalism is opposed to the four versions of internalism on Smith's Wheel of Internalism, namely, expressivism, the speaker relativism, Harman's relativism, and the non-relative dispositional theory of value.

Let us now compare internalism and externalism. Michael Smith has shown that internalism can never provide the ontological ground for moral truths. At most, it can provide the ground for moral quasi-truths. The internalists may say that the moral quasi-truth is sufficient for their moral practice. But the quasi-truth can never be sufficient for critical reflection, which Blackburn stresses for the improvement of our moral standards. When we critically reflect on our moral standards, or critically

compare our moral standards with other moral standards, what normative standards are we appealing in our critical reflection? If we appeal to our own standards in critically evaluating those standards, they can never be found faulty. The only fault we can find is the conflict within our standards. The only meaningful test is the test of coherence, which John Rawls called the reflective equilibrium. But any moral system—even the Nazi morality—can achieve reflective equilibrium. This is the predicament of internalism, which can never permit the use of external standards, that is, external to its own standards. Because the use of internal standards is self-justifying, critical reflection can never justify moral standards in any meaningful sense as long as it relies on the internal standards. When we critically compare two moral systems, the same problem of internalism arises. The two moral systems have their own standards. Which one of them should we use in comparing the two? If we use one of them, our critical reflection will produce one result. If we use the other, our critical reflection will produce a totally different result. There is no critical procedure to decide which is a better way of comparing the two moral systems. Here again we are stuck in the cave of internalism. We can get out of it only by appealing to some external standards. But the external standards had better be transcendent. Some external standards can still be positive norms, namely, the positive norms other than the positive norms of the two moral systems we are critically examining. The use of these positive external norms can never get us out of the cave of internalism because all positive norms belong to some internalist camp as Michael Smith holds.

If we are truly trapped in our internalist cave, how can we ever think of getting out of it? This is one big mystery for internalism. When we run into someone who has moral beliefs and attitudes quite different from ours, we can make three different responses to the stranger's moral standards. First, we can dogmatically assume that our moral beliefs and attitudes are right because they are ours. Therefore the

stranger's moral standards are wrong. Second, we can naively assume that the stranger's standards are right because he comes from a superior culture. This often happens with cultural imperialism. In that case, we will believe that our moral standards are faulty. But neither of these two responses is critical reflection. We can make a truly critical response only if we can approach the stranger's standards with the open possibility that they can be right or wrong not by our standards or his standards. In that case, we are implicitly appealing to some standards that transcend both our and his standards. The very idea of critical reflection presupposes this openness for transcendence.

The same idea of normative transcendence lies behind Michael Smith's drive of the Wheel of Internalism. Faced with two speaker relativists, he assumes that there should be a way to transcend their differences. Without this assumption, there is no reason to move up to the next level. I have already noted that one can easily take the policy of non-interference in coping with the difference between two relativists. Let every relativist take care of his or her own morals and not bother with the morals of others, who have their own relative standards. Why can we not comfortably settle on this position? Why do we feel uncomfortable with this non-interference policy? It may be because we are all accepting the demand of universality for our moral judgments as Blackburn says. But what is the source of this strange demand? It may be built in our attitudes, Blackburn may say. But if our attitudes are private feelings, they cannot make the demand of universality. The concept of universality cannot be a matter of feeling. It can be explained only by postulating an object that corresponds to the concept. Such an object is the Platonic transcendent standard.

The existence of transcendent norm does not mean that we can do without the positive norms. The transcendent norms are general principles as Michael Smith says. They are too general and too indeterminate to be the practical guides for our daily

moral life. Just imagine that we get rid of our complex tax code and govern all our taxations by one general principle: Everyone should pay his or her fair share of taxes every year. This principle will create insurmountable uncertainty for the taxpayers. We can avoid the uncertainty of general principles by translating them into specific rules and standards, which are written down in our tax codes. They are our positive norms, which Mackie calls the community standards or the first-order rules. But Mackie does not provide the basis for the construction of positive norms. Instead he assumes that they can be constructed by social contracts. But some social contracts may turn out to be unfair and need to be critically evaluated. Mackie can provide no ground for this sort of critical reflection on social contracts. But the Platonists can say that the transcendent norms can provide the normative ground for critically evaluating positive norms. There is a two-way relation between the transcendent and the positive norms, as T. K. Seung explains in chapter 7 of his *Plato Rediscovered*. The positive norms are constructed in reference to the transcendent norms; the former are critically evaluated in reference to the latter. The process of evaluation is the Platonic ascent. It starts out with positive norms and move up to transcendent norms for the critical evaluation of positive norms. The process of construction is the Platonic descent. It begins with transcendent norms and moves downward to positive norms or their construction.

The transcendent and the positive norms are Plato's two normative orders, which are similar to Mackie's two orders. Mackie's first order is the order of positive norms. He correctly assumes that the first order is based on the second order of higher values or principles. He also believes that these higher norms or principles are different from the positive norms. His idea of the two moral orders is the unique feature of his moral theory. It is so unique and different from most theories that it has been attacked and ridiculed by Blackburn and many others. But I believe that

Mackie's theory alone captures the most essential feature of our moral experience that has been missed by most internalists. Whenever we are faced with some particular rules such as "Do not steal" or "Do not lie," we rarely take them as the self-authenticating norms. On the contrary, we instinctively assume that those particular rules are derived from some higher principles. For any moral rules, we can sensibly ask the why of those rules. This is the question of their justification, which can be answered only by citing a higher principle. This is the beginning of normative ascent. The higher principle cited in this ascent may be a higher positive norm. But our normative ascent cannot terminate with the highest positive norms such as the U. S. Constitution, because we can raise the same question of justification even for our highest positive norms. Thus our normative ascent must go beyond the domain of positive norms and reach out for transcendent norms. With this move, our normative ascent becomes the Platonic ascent, which alone can provide the ultimate justification of all positive norms.

The Platonic ascent, however, requires the Platonic Forms. How can we know that such transcendent norms exist? This has been the most obvious question about Platonism. Mackie has a simple answer for this question because he is a committed Humean, for whom the empirical test alone can settle the question of existence. He is convinced that Platonic Forms do not exist because they are empirically inaccessible. Hence he concludes that the objective values do not exist and that the second order is based on the false belief in the existence of objective values. This is his error theory. What can the Platonists say against his empirical stand? They can only repeat what Plato said two thousand years ago. Mackie is right in saying that the transcendent norms cannot be detected by the empirical test. But they are accessible intellectually. But what evidence do we have to say that they are intellectually accessible? If they are inaccessible, our sense of justice can never transcend the domain of positive

norms. Our idea of justice will be limited to the available positive norms. But I have already considered the possibility of taking a critical stance on any positive norms. This sort of open critical stance is impossible unless we have the sense of justice that can transcend all positive norms. We may call it the transcendent moral sense in distinction from the positive moral sense. In the end, we come down to this critical question: "Is our moral sense limited to the positive moral sense or includes the transcendent moral sense?" This is the choice between normative positivism and normative transcendentism.

Normative positivism says that our moral sense is totally limited by positive norms and that our moral life is exclusively governed by positive norms. This is what Mackie tries to say. On the other hand, normative transcendentism says that our moral life is much richer than the life of positive norms and that we rely on our sense of transcendent norms in critically evaluating positive norms and in constructively shaping and reshaping those positive norms. There is no way to provide an empirical validation of our transcendent moral sense. Nevertheless, it must be presupposed if our moral life is to be richer than the life exclusively governed by normative positivism. Without presupposing it, the justification of our positive norms can never transcend the domain of positive norms. At most, it can end with the reflective equilibrium of our positive norms. That means we cannot do any better than the Nazis. Moreover, we can never overcome the embarrassment of Russell's bullfight and Harman's Hitler. We have no right to say that Hitler is evil. In order to evaluate Hitler's conducts, we impose more than relativistic standards on Hitler. But relativism clearly says that we have no right to do so. The acceptance of transcendent norms is the most sensible way to cope with Russell's bullfight and Harman's Hitler. Without transcendent norms, we can secure moral truths only by means of convergence. But convergence never happens because there is always some dissent

on any difficult moral issues. Just imagine that convergence by agreement is the only way to secure scientific truths. We can never have scientific truths. The majority of humankind still does not accept or does not even understand Newton's and Einstein's theories. The theories cannot be true because there is no convergence on those theories yet. For the sake of truth, what we need is not the convergence of opinions, but the criterion for discriminating the true opinions from the false ones. There can be no better criterion than the reference to the objects of those opinions. The ultimate objects of moral truths cannot be anything other than the transcendent norms.

The idea of transcendent moral sense may sound queer to some people. Let us now suppose that there is no such thing as transcendent moral sense. Then we should never be worried about moral relativism. It makes no sense at all why Russell should be worried about over the question whether his distaste for bullfight is merely a subjective prejudice or objectively true, because there is nothing objective or transcendent by our assumption. It is equally pointless for Harman to say that he can make the outer judgment that Hitler is evil, because he has no right to say anything of the kind. Without appealing to our transcendent moral sense, we can never meaningfully talk about critical evaluation and justification of positive norms. Where then do the positive norms derive their authority and justification? They can do so from the people who make them. Where do they derive their authority? They derive it from their power. Normative positivism ultimately rests on the principle that might is right. We have to accept all these consequences if our moral sense is restricted to the positive norms. They are the extremely troublesome consequences of moral internalism, which have happened to all the moral philosophers I have examined in this dissertation. They can free themselves from those consequences of internalism only by accepting transcendent moral sense. But the acceptance of transcendent moral sense is possible only by the acceptance of transcendent norms. This is the

Platonic argument for the accessibility of transcendent norms and their indispensability for our moral life.

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